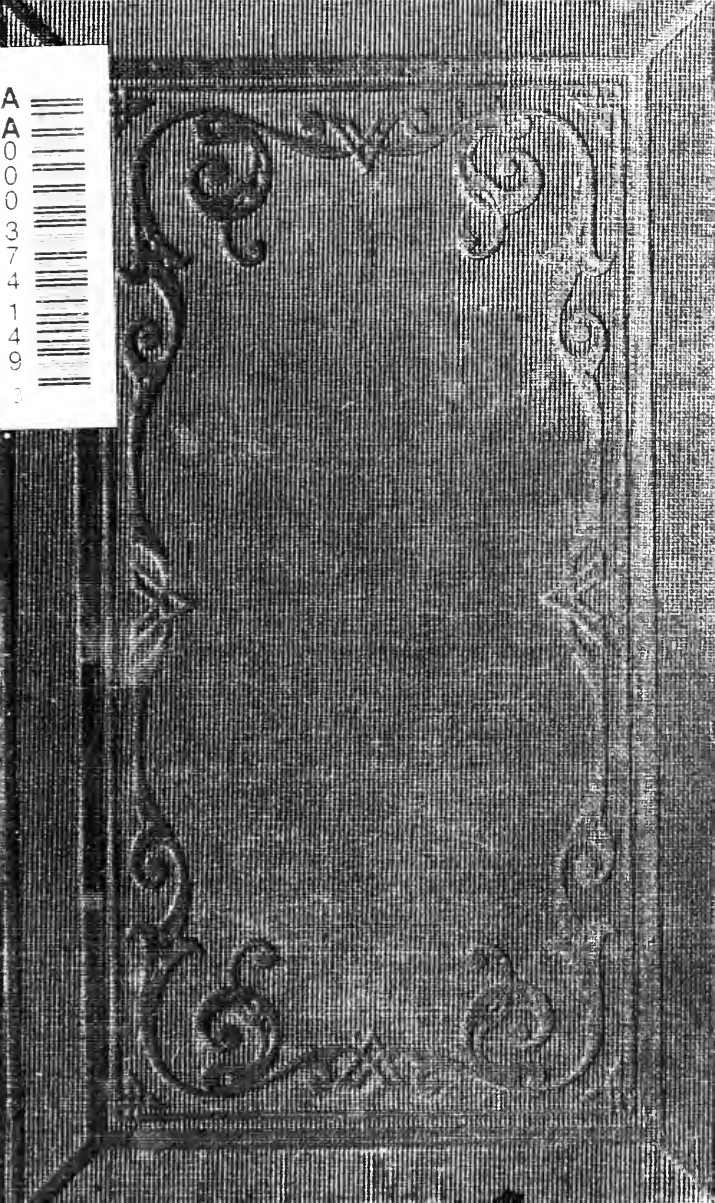


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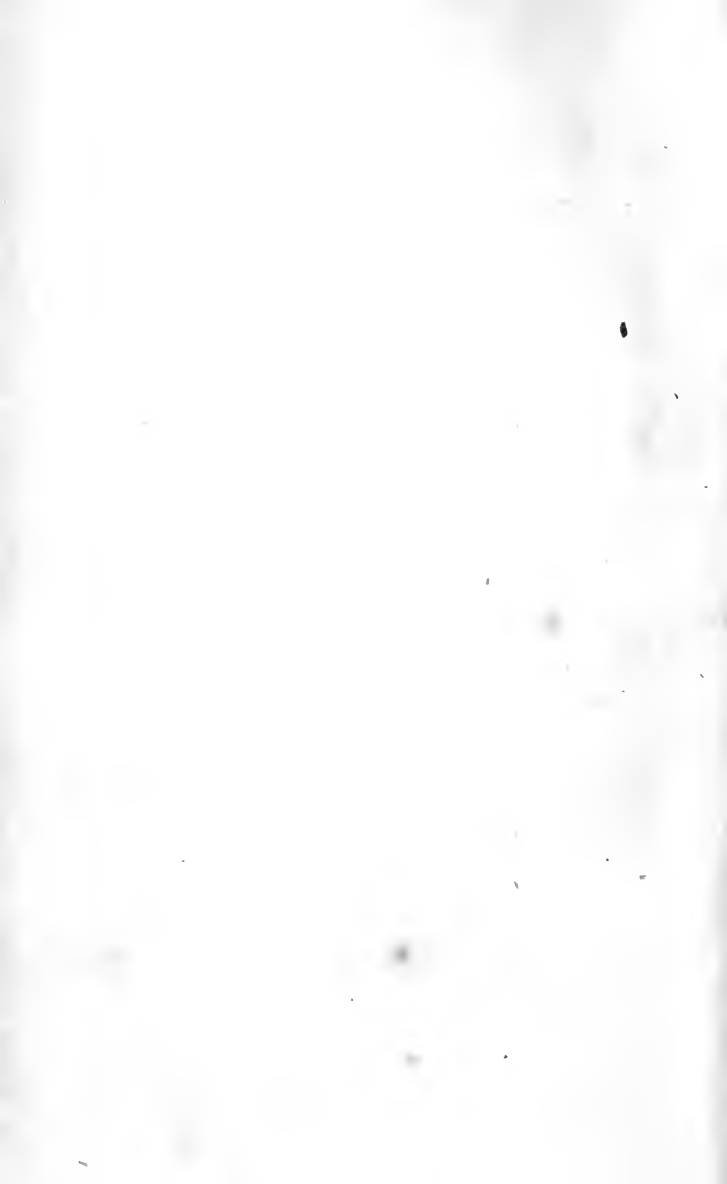




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The Viscountess Hood

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P O E M S .

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P O E M S,

BY THE

REV. GEORGE EDMOND MAUNSELL.

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

M.DCCC.LXI.

*These pieces, with the exception of those of later date, were
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P O E M S .

Think of the Silent Dead.

THINK of the silent dead !
The loved, whose souls are fled,
We trust, unto their God.
Their place on earth is gone,
Their friends have looked their last ;
A dreary blank alone
Reminds us of the past.
Think of the silent dead !

Theirs is a race that's run,
Theirs is a fight that's done ;
 Forgotten, out of mind !
Still in affliction's bond
 Let them retain their part ;
Where should their memories live,
 If not within our heart ?
 Think of the silent dead !

Years may have passed away,
Blithe may have sped each day,
 And dulled our sorrow's edge ;
It may be still they watch,
 And weep our every pain ;
One thought of answering love,
 Let them not watch in vain.
 Think of the silent dead !

1842.

Forest Winds.

A SOUND of forest winds is on my hearing,
 A sound as of the distant sea at night ;
 Nearing, on viewless wings still ever nearing,
 Through the tree-tops it rushes in its might.
 The tall elms hoarsely groan,
 The ashes wail and sigh,
 In deep and measured tone,
 Booming, the oaks reply.

A lull—the dancing brown leaves downwards flutter,
 The frantic tossing of the branches stops,
 The beech-tree stills midway its rustling mutter,
 The whistling firs lift up their bended tops.
 Each has a voice its own,
 Answering the storm-wind's call,
 And yet one Power alone,
 One Spirit wakens all.

So Nature's impulse, through the many going,
 Strikes different chords, new impulses imparts ;
 Think pitifully we of each, as knowing
 Not ours the key-note to our fellows' hearts.
 Mysteries full oft appear
 Thoughts, unto others fair ;
 Love in them all will hear
 But the one Spirit there.

1854.

The Nuns of Coldingham.

“ In the last whereof (Coldingham), Lady Ebbe, with her chaste minnes, to auoid their sauage and filthy pollutions, cut off their owne noses and vpper lips, least the baite of their beauties should prone the bane of their honours.”—*SPEED’S Chronicle.*

A SONG for the holy sisters,
The God-devoted band !
Who wrought for themselves their safety,
When the Dane was in the land !

To our Lady with strong cryings
They lifted up their voice,
And she gave them grace in choosing,
And strength for the bitter choice.

They took no shield on the weak arm,
No sword, or spear, for strife,
But gave themselves to the torture,
Their lips to the shearing knife !

And the baffled Dane with curses
Went backwards at the sight,
And the crown was left unsullied
On the martyrs’ wreath of light ! *

1857.

* Bishop Taylor’s *Holy Living*, ch. xi. sec. 3.

M u s i c.

I LOVE the music that hath power to wake
 A sympathy responsive in the soul ;
 Some wild and touching air, some ballad old.
 Is to me far beyond the hurrying roll,
 The swift, continuous clang, that tells, indeed,
 Of science and hard learned mechanic art,
 Calls forth and merits wonder and applause,
 But with the heart's emotion hath no part.
 Nor with the rude, unthinking crowd would I
 Throng to drink in the sounds I love to hear :
 But far apart from all, and unobserved,
 List to the notes soft stealing on the ear.

Strange and mysterious power ! it may be, taught
 First by some fallen seraph, who with eye
 Upturned to Heaven, on earth would fain essay
 Sadly her yet remembered minstrelsy.

Gift to the chosen few ! full oft the heart,
 Even in hours of mirth and reckless glee,
 As conscious of some yearning want, some void,
 Lists to thy chords, and solace finds in thee ;
 As the tired eye, with gorgeous colours vexed,
 From feeding on some painter's Eastern scene,
 Gladly from art to nature turns her gaze,
 And rests, refreshed, on cooling fields of green.

On a Seal

ENGRAVED WITH A BROKEN SHAMROCK AND THE IRISH
WORD SIGNIFYING "SORROW."



GOD'S chastening hand is on thee sore ; *
With deadly drink thy cup runs o'er ;
Bow down—no aid, Ierne, more
 Canst thou from mortal borrow !
Thy broken shamrock droops her head ;
Thy sons are passed away, or fled.
Hang up thine harp, as of one dead,
 And be thy motto, **Sorrow**.

Ill-fated island of the west !
Hope cheers e'en slaves with grief o'erprest :
Thou hast no hope ; for one unblest
 There is no bright to-morrow.
Then grave thy seal with lines of woe,
Worn by thy tears' repentant flow ;
From idols turn, and seek to know
 The holier part of **Sorrow**.

1847.

* The year of the famine.

A Legend of Hastings Field.

“ So that Harold, lying stript, bemangled, and goared in his bloud, could not be known or found, ’till they sent for a woman named Editha (for her passing beauty surnamed Swan-shals, that is, Swansnecke), whom he entertained in secret lone before he was king, who, by some secret markes of his body, to her well known, found him out.”—*SPEED’S Chronicle.*

PART I.

THERE came two monks* from Waltham church
To Edith Swanshal’s door.

“ Rise up this night, and come with us ;
Good truth ! we need thee sore.”

“ I may not rise. My knees are bent
In prayer both night and day ;
For vigils, fasting, tears, alone
Can wipe my guilt away ! ”

* Osegod and Ailric.—*SPEED’S Chronicle.*

- “ Yet rise thou up, and for a space
 Leave cross and bead within,
And Waltham Abbey’s mitred lord
 Shall shrive thee of the sin.”
- “ Oh ! leave me, leave me to my prayers,
 My watchings in the night ;
God’s coming dawn and Mary’s wrath
 Would blast me in thy sight ! ”
- “ Yet rise and come ; or if thou pray’st,
 For Harold be thy prayer ;
He lies a corpse on Hastings field—
 And thou must seek him there.”

She started up—drew bolt and bar ;
 No word she uttered more ;
But barefoot, even as she knelt,
 Ran headlong from the door.

PART II.

THE thin gray mist on Hastings field
 Was steaming from the dead,
When at the dawn they trod the ground,
 With corpses overspread.

And all that livelong day they searched
Each blood-bedabbled spot ;
And many a knight and thane they found,
But Harold found they not.

“ When God denies,” old Ailric said,
“ All vainly man shall try.”
But even as he spoke went forth
A sharp and bitter cry.

There, on the rising hill where last
The Saxon fought and bled,
Knelt Edith Swanshal, bending o’er
The long-sought royal dead.

But stripped and mangled as he lay
Upon the trampled turf,
No eye save that of love had known
King Harold from a serf.

A monk’s rough frock for purple robe,
A wattled bier for throne ;
So bore they off the corpse, and left
Fair Edith there alone.

She might not brook the funeral pomp,
The sorrowing people’s gaze ;
But homewards turned, and in her grief
Went softly all her days.

Ah, Edith ! with that bitter cry
 Uplifted o'er the dead,
From out thy very heart of hearts
 A lingering hope had fled.

The world to thee became a void,
 And on that bloody sod
The love which Harold shared before
 Was wholly turned to God.

1857.

The last Hours of the Infanticide.



AM I sleeping yet, and shall the morrow
 Break for me as it was wont of old,
 Dry from off my cheek the dreamer's sorrow,
 Leave the visioned past a tale untold !

As I stir a watchful eye is peering
 Up from yonder pallet in my cell,
 Whilst I almost hope, upon my hearing
 Tolls the midnight from the prison bell.

Ah ! I mind me now of thronging faces,
 Mocking eyed, and eager, as for sport ;
 Hundreds looking up, and in high places
 Men arrayed for judgment, and a Court.

And I heard, or seemed to hear, one seeking
 Answer back from one he doomed to die—
 Pitifully, sadly, sternly speaking
 Unto one—and oh, my God ! 'twas I !

Born to early want and hardship, never
Knew I childhood's free and careless heart ;
At the poor man's hearth the youngest ever,
As the oldest there, must play her part.

Ladies took me thence, a child unwitting
Of my low and brutalized estate,
Clothed, and gave me learning more befitting
To the children of the rich and great.

So to early haunts again returning,
There to toil and eat the peasant's bread,
Pride arose and shame, and, undiscerning
Of the future ill, I turned and fled.

All my after acts and deeds confessing,
In good truth, what have I yet to tell ?
But the world-wide story : want was pressing,
And the tempter there, and so I fell.

As a feverish morning dream, departed
All the guilty splendours of my life ;
And I woke, deserted, broken-hearted,
Soon to be a mother, but no wife.

So my shame was known, and future horrors
Rose before me at my baby's cry ;
“ Back to God,” I said, “ and shun thy sorrows :
Unto thee at least 'tis gain to die ! ”

Oh! ye mothers, in your thoughts adorning
Your new-born ones with each hopeful sign,
Think ye not that I, too, saw the scorning,
And the bitter shame in store for mine!

As refusing comfort ye will languish,
While your infants suffer day by day;
Think ye not that I, too, had my anguish,
When my hand was lifted up to slay!

But ye cannot know the fiend that urges
Guilty ones like me from ill to worse,
When our noblest feelings are our scourges,
And our best affections but our curse.

Go, then, and in fiction's pages duly
Write our histories as of injured worth,
But remember, if ye write them truly,
One short line suffices—"Hell on earth."

See! the morning of my last day shining;
Hark! rude voices mingling with the breeze;
And the author of my death, reclining
In his chair shall read it at his ease!

Blood for blood—for rapine, slander, stealings,
Gaols and fines, dishonour and control;
What for him, ye men of pious feelings,
Who hath slain the body and the soul?

He shall live, unscathed and undegraded—

Live for pleasure, quiet, or for fame :

I shall perish, hated and upbraided,

With the brand of murd'ress on my name !

So man's justice has ordained it, giving

Record of his care for such as I,

As unfit to mingle with the living,

And, my God ! oh, how unfit to die !

1859.

Wulstan.

“William the Conqueror having demanded the pastoral staff and ring of Wulstan, Bishop of Worcester, he answered that he had them from King Edward, and would give them back to him alone; and going to the Confessor’s tomb, struck the crozier so deeply into the stone, that no one was able to draw it out, on which he was allowed to retain the bishopric.”
 —*Note to Hume’s History of England.*

HE stood by Edward’s tomb,
 That man of saintly mien,
 Around with brows of gloom
 The Conqueror’s hosts were seen.

“And ye have come,” he said,
 “With sword and spear arrayed,
 With mail, and helm on head,
 And ye must be obeyed !

“From Edward, sainted king,
 Ye men of haughty brow,
 I hold this staff and ring,
 And I restore them now.”

He spake with awful frown,
And face almost divine,
And struck the crozier down
Deep through the marble shrine.

Then thronged they round the stone,
That evil Norman rout ;
No hand save his alone
Might draw that crozier out.

And, " Back," he cried, " of men
God's servants have no fear ;
Back to your tents again,
Lest ill befall you here ! "

And Norman William quailed,
And scoffs were heard no more,
And cheeks with fear were paled,
That fear ne'er paled before.

And silently they crushed
Back from the sainted stone ;
The voice of strife was hushed,
And he was left alone.

A l o n e .

THE seasons come and go,
The night succeeds to day,
With ceaseless, noiseless flow
The year-stream glides away.

Let days and months depart,
Let years run out their range ;
But oh, for one true heart
To share in every change !

1860.

Night-Scented Flowers.

NOT in your comeliness the eye rejoices
 Beneath the sun's broad light,
 Not to the outward ear ye raise your voices,
 Flower-spirits of the night !

Yet, as your still, mysterious life progresses,
 Both form and speech are shown
 In hues, whose loveliness the soul confesses
 In language all your own.

When, foreordained, one change succeeds another,
 When light rolls back the cloud,
 Ye flaunt not in the one, beneath the other
 Ye droop not, earthwards bowed ;

But in the weirdest darkness, or the shining
 Of countless stars, your eyes
 Alike are lifted up, and unrepining
 Your odours heav'nwards rise.

So are ye types of faith, from God receiving
 According to His will,
 Meek under good bestowed, and still believing
 Him present in the ill.

Let not my Child be a Girl.

“ Let not my child be a girl,
For very sorrowful is the lot of woman.”
PRAIRIE.

A MOTHER'S words ! *Is* woman's life so sad,
That this should be of all her earliest prayer ?
Not for long length of days, not health, not gold.
Nought, so the unborn 'scape the woes she bear.
Yet so it is. Our fixed conventional rules
Weigh down her feelings, e'en from girlhood's spring ;
Custom and fashion wrest her heart to earth,
And send her forth an artificial thing.

Is woman's life so sad ? Go, search the world,
From Europe's polished climes to savage land ;
Still the same lot, the same oft-trodden round,
The weary, sorrowing heart, the oppressing hand.

Oh, man ! creation's haughty, boastful lord,
Where is thy vaunted justice ? Thou hast all
This world can offer : thou mayst choose, and tread
Thine own selected paths ; and if thou fall,
If vice allure thee, man can pardon man.

The high-born fool, the gamester, and the cheat,
The adulterer, knave, seducer, aye, for each,
So they have wealth, the world is at their feet.
But woman's path is fixed, and if *she* fall,
She is for ever fallen.

Man may woo,
May wed for wealth, but woman's heart must stand
Steeled to the world's first idol, and eschew
Her home, her childhood's comforts—all for one,
For one who gives her but a transient joy,
A fleeting glimpse of bliss, then casts aside,
Like to some froward child, his cherished toy.
Man's voice is free, and if, perchance, he love,
He may declare it ; woman still must keep
Her secret hidden close within her heart.
She has but one resource, to hope and weep.

To hope ! What hope for her who vainly writhes
In custom's iron shackles ? She must stand
Before God's altar, not with him she sought,
But with her parents' choice, and give her hand
Where she gives not her heart ; or if, perchance,
Love's course run smooth, too quickly from her eyes
Shall fall the scales, and falling, tint with gall
Those lesser faults, those bickerings that arise
E'en with the best. The gentle lover's lost
In the stern husband : she, whose slightest word
Late was his only law, now finds her spurned,
Her wish unheeded, and her will abhorred.

Yet still the same devotedness is asked,
Still the same love, as when he bowed his heart
Low at her feet. She, in return, may claim
All that the world claims not—a meagre part !

Man may in selfish pleasures pass his day,
Free from domestic strife. In hopes to share
The old man's gold, the expectant world looks on,
Praises his wisdom, and applauds his care.
But woman's wealth is but another grief,
Another stumbling-block to mar her way ;
The adventurer, the needy, polished rake,
The ruined spendthrift, mark her as their prey.
She, for awhile, perchance, is wise, but soon
Womanlike, yields her heart, and, free from doubt,
Measuring his love by hers, esteems her blest,
Only *too* blest with that man, who, without
Her wealth, had never sought her. So he lives
And grows within her heart, not what in sooth
He is, but what her love would fain believe ;
All constancy, bright honour, changeless truth !
And then the *old*, old lot.

Ah, me ! how oft

Love lights at Hymen's torch his funeral pyres ;
How oft, in after years, he learns to read
Rightly that once dark speech, " All men are liars !"

Cease, then, ye unjust fools, your whining dirge
O'er woman's falseness, and o'er man betrayed !

Flesh of thy flesh she is, bone of thy bone,
And if she mock thee, thou thyself hast made
Her false and venal. Aye, for one aggrieved
Truly by woman, thousands, forced to roam,
Weep man's injustice, and those wiles of men,
That lured them first from virtue and their home.
Yet, like the hyæna wailing o'er his prey,
Ye wail the ruin ye yourselves have brought ;
Crush, as she springs, all nature in her heart,
Teach her to feign, unfeignedly curse her taught.

1848.

New Year's Eve.

IT seems a strange, unthinking part
 For mortal man to play,
 That we should mark in revelry
 The old year pass away.

Yes, 'tis as if round some friend's couch,
 Who gasps and strives for breath,
 We were to lead the merry dance,
 And mock him in his death.

Man ! in futurity's dark womb
 The new year's boons are pent ;
 Who may declare what sooth shall be
 Ere her young hours be spent !

Cease, then, thus blindly to rejoice,
 Or turn thy thoughts to Heaven ;
 Pray that this year be better spent,
 Or pray the past forgiven.

1848.

Dreams.

As the foam-bells that dance, and sport, and play,
In the fountain's fall, then pass away ;
As the shadow of clouds in April gleams,
Ye flit o'er the spirit, ye mystic dreams !
Are ye boders of ill that needs must be,
Or come ye to warn us to rise and flee ?
I know not in truth, yet I marvel not
That ye swayed, in the times of old, man's lot ;
For the spirit eternal vigil keeps,
And the soul rests not, though the body sleeps ;
And ye, like the still, small winds that stray
Through the slumberer's book on a summer's day,
Flit hither and there through memory's page,
From the youth's first hope to the grief of age,
And entwine, ere a moment's sand be run,
The future, and present, and past, as one.

1848.

Speak kindly of the Dead.

SPEAK kindly of the dead,
Or pass their memories by ;
When once life's spark is fled,
All thoughts but one should die.

It may be, whiles they ran
A fitful, devious race,
Yet who, in this their span,
Might every motive trace ?

Not ours to judge the deed ;
Enough that they are gone :
Pity the broken reed,
Or silently pass on.

1849.

William Rufus.

SPEAK not of chance or accident
 Befalling mortal man,
We breathe, we move, we live within
 A God-directed span.

And though our will or hand may seem
 To govern or to force,
His finger surely turns us to
 The predetermined course.

Along the forest grounds at morn
 The Red King passed alone,
By ruined wall, by roofless hut,
 With brambles overgrown.

Small thought had he of homeless poor,
 Small care for bondsman's lack,
Nor where his father's hand had robbed
 Restored he meetly back.

But reckless, ruthless in his sport,
 He galloped down the path,
To rouse the wild deer from his lair
 Upon his people's hearth.

A stag rose up : his bow in haste,
The ambushed Tyrrel drew,
The glancing arrow turned aside,
And pierced the Red King through.

None raised him up, none sought to stay
The fast departing breath,
Forsaken and alone he proved
The bitterness of death.

Down sank the sun, the crouching fox
Went stealing round the dead,
The hind snuffed blood upon the gale,
And starting, turned and fled.

And all that night from wall and tower
The flaring torches glow'd,
And menials from the castle gate
Peered listening down the road ;

But in the portion of the poor,
Like Israel's King of old,*
When quiet morning's beam arose,
Lay Rufus stark and cold !

1853.

* 2 Kings, ix. 25.

To an old Friend.

As two ships at midnight meeting,
 Their course a moment stay,
 Exchanging friendly greeting,
 Then pass by on their way ;

So we met, old friend, true-hearted !
 In the early flush of life ;
 But the pause was brief, we parted,
 And passed on into strife.

As two ships, their course renewing,
 Gaze on each other's light,
 Every eye the spark pursuing,
 Till it vanishes from sight ;

So, awhile, we watched each other,
 Launching forth upon life's main ;
 Thou hast passed from sight, O brother !
 Shall we ever meet again ?

1849.

John, viii. 4.

FRIENDLESS and outcast,
 Weeping alone,
 None, save the Righteous One,
 Heeding her moan ;
 Mock her not, scoff her not,
 Pale, bruised reed,
 Rather leave judgment
 Till judgment's decreed !

Happiness, honest name,
 What were they all,
 Weighed against him who
 Hath compassed her fall ?
 Liar, seducer,
 Chief in the deed !
 Where is he now, in
 The hour of her need ?

Oh, thine injustice,
 Thou pitiless world !
 Oh, the lost souls, whom
 Thou downwards hast hurled !

Fawn on him, cherish him,
Set him on high ;
As for the stricken one,—
Leave her to die !

Sorrowful sister !
Ill was thy deed ;
Meekly submit thee
To infamy's meed !
Shrinking and speechless,
Midst clamour and strife,
Circled with scornors who
Thirst for thy life,
Magdalen, Sinner,
Look upwards and trust,
Thou hast found mercy,
Though humbled to dust.

1850.

Christmas Eve.

ONCE more alone on Christmas eve,

I watch the glimmering embers wane,
And listening wait, yet scarce believe

Immanuel's day come round again.
Yet so it is ; one distant note

Comes echoing softly down the gale,
Then livelier, louder, nearer float

The answering peals from hill and dale,
Till all, as one, proclaim the morn

When "unto us a child was born."

Yea, *unto us*,—but days like these

(The traveller's wayside guides through life)
Have saddening thoughts which bow the knees,

And goad the slumbering soul to strife ;
For quickening conscience backward turns

Her memory down the vale of tears,
Where many a dusky Baal-fire burns

In lengthening range with lengthened years,
And wakes the thought, "If I should die

This self-same night, what part have I?"

Ah, soul, self-conscious, trembling soul !

Though Naaman's lord should interpose,
Not Israel's king can make thee whole,

Or Syrian Pharphar aid thy woes.
In humbler lands (as seemed of old)

The appointed waters took their rise,
From lowlier founts through earth were rolled

The healing streams, where faith describes
The smitten rock, the plenteous flood

Of heavenly waters tinged with blood.

Deem not such themes as these unapt

In Christian joy, nor have thou scorn
(Since heaven itself was hushed and wrapped

In awe) to think *why* Christ was born.
So, circling round, the coming years

Shall work not gathering woe, but weal ;
Bring heavenward hopes for earth-clogged fears,

And teach the hungry soul to feel
Blest, when her eyes not only see

Bethlehem, but also Calvary.

1857.

The Rejected.

I THOUGHT not at first of the future, but gladly
 I saw thee, I heard thee, I *felt* thee ere near,
 As a dream of the morning it stole on my senses ;
 I wakened to find thee but only too dear.

'Tis over—my heart is too full for reproaches,
 Or, fitfully angry, yet lives in the past,
 And the musings on hours when I hoped are but ended
 In bitter regret that they fled so fast.

Farewell—be the madness I cherished forgiven,
 The words that I uttered with thee as unsaid,
 And my name from thy thoughts blotted out, or
 remembered,
 Rememberèd only as though of one dead.

1856.

PART II.

IN this, the busiest haunt of men,
 For me the moments idly fly,
 The echoing streets are filled with life,
 And every soul can hope but I.

As yet my heart is bruised and sore,
Nor dares to scan the impending day,
But, sadly lingering, only sees
The darkening shade upon the way.

I dare not say of this, my grief,
“ God’s chalice holds no bitterer wine ; ”
Nor, “ Circling Time, who tempers all,
Is powerless here to temper mine.”

What shall be, will be. Every year
May find me sorrowing as before,
May find me happier, and resigned
To lose what was, and is no more.

God grant it so—and if, perchance,
Some natural clouds obscure thy sun,
His guardian angels interpose,
And pitying Mercy spare thee *one*.

1857.

Queen Eleanor.

THE summer's sea, the courtier's knee,
 The whispering winds that stray ;
 Oh ! some make oath that woman's troth
 Is fair and false as they.

It may be so, but this I know,
 And this I will defend,
 Her once fixed love no power can move,
 Nor death nor tortures end.

Then hear me tell what once befel
 Our king in Holy Land,
 How woman's art and woman's heart
 Wrought more than leech's hand.

The princely wight to death was dight,
 He sank in torments slow ;
 The venom'd knife had touch'd his life,
 And tinged the heart's blood flow.

And though was seen our comely queen
 By day and eke by night,
 To seek each way his pains to stay,
 And give him to the fight,

'Twas all in vain ; the poison's stain
Still rankled in his side ;
Oh, then vowed she to do or dree,
And would not be denied.

Her watch she kept when all men slept,
And, bending down her knee,
Her own sweet lip the wound did clip,
As in a swoon lay he.

Then tell no more of poet's lore,
Or maids who false have grown,
For Edward's life his royal wife
Full freely staked her own ;

And many a maid so coy and staid,
And many a high-born dame,
Aye, hundreds more, on England's shore
For love had done the same.

Cassandra landing in Greece.

I SEE the green shore fresh and fairly glowing
 Far in the distance of the clear blue sky ;
 With even stroke the well-oared barks are rowing :
 A captive's lot awaits me ; Greece is nigh.
 Ah, me ! those festive notes' responsive echo,
 The soft, sweet breathings of the Dorian flute,
 The white-armed virgins linked in choral dances,
 The love-fraught measures of the Etolian lute !
 How sadly fall the notes of hostile triumph,
 The gathering people's hum upon mine ear ;
 All, all their clamours serve but to remind me
 Why I, a Phrygian maid, a queen, am here.

Alas, my country, Ilion ! now no longer
 The unconquered, but the captive of the spear,*
 Shorn wert thou of thy crown of towers, when o'er
 thee
 The thunder-cloud of Greece came shadowing near.
 Poor wretch, all smoke-defiled and fire-blasted,
 No more shall I thy glorious mansions tread ;
 Lost, lost at midnight's hour, when thy defenders
 Slept, hot with Phrygian wine, and filled with bread.

* A loose translation from the *Hecuba* of Euripides.

I, too, my hair in fillets deftly binding,
Was glancing back upon the mirror's light,
For sleep preparing, when, oh, sudden horror !
The war-shout broke the silence of the night.
And I, half naked, like some Dorian virgin,
Sped forth for succour to Diana's fane ;
Alas ! that I prevailed not. Heart-sick, fainting,
They bore me captive o'er the briny main.

We come. I feel a sea of upturned faces
Upon me, like some fearful vision rise ;
Hatred and triumph in each glance commingled,
Glare wolf-like on me from their fierce dark eyes !
I hear a fitful sound of joy and wailing,
Loud bursts of triumph, weeping for the slain ;
They ask them at my hand, the countless numbers
Who rot, afar, on Ilion's blood-soaked plain.

Who waits with downcast look and guile dissembled
To bid Atrides welcome to his throne ?
What mean those ghastly shades, yon axe uplifted,
The entangled robe, the low-drawn, quivering groan ?
I see, I see fell visions round me flitting,
And blood-red vapours floating in the air ;
The baths are all prepared, the victim ready—
Strike ! strike ! 'tis destiny, adulterous pair !

Hades is moved beneath my feet ; upheaving
Sound forth the pæans of the Phrygian dead ;
“ Art thou become as us, great son of Atreus ?
How are thy triumphs passed, thy glories fled ! ”

Not there ! not there ! Oh, drag me not within !
Dark, undistinguishable forms are there ;
The furies leap around, and, murder-tainted,
Sickens upon my very sense the air.

Where am I ? Oh, those shapes, those fearful
visions !

The gift of Phœbus in an ill-starred day,
Lead onwards in your train, proud, vaunting monarch,
The gods ordain it, man can but obey.

1850.

Joy and Sorrow.

JOY and Sorrow—names combining
In themselves the lot of all ;
In two words a life intertwining,
Whatsoever may befall.

Old familiar sounds, and duly
In the mouths of grave and gay,
Yet we know not either *truly*,
Till its hour be passed away.

1857.

The Angel's Whisper.

"I know that the angels are whispering with thee."
 LOVER'S *Irish Song*.

IN Erin's isle, where yet is told
 Full many a tale and legend old
 Of pale banshee and wandering sprite,
 Phooka, and fay, and blue corpse light,
 Still do they in the faith abide,
 That often by the cradle's side
 Angels, unseen, their vigils keep,
 Guardians of those who calmly sleep.
 So, if some happy dream awhile
 Light up the slumbering infant's smile,
 Fondly they deem that, hovering near,
 Angels are whispering at its ear.

Idle, perchance, and vain the thought,
 Yet, as I deem, full surely taught
 First by that spark from heaven above,
 That holiest thing, a mother's love.

Aye, and though learning's broadening ray
Chaseth such mist-like dreams away,
Though now our hearts respond no more
To the wild tales of ancient lore,
May it not chance that still there be
In the young soul some sympathy
'Twixt heaven and earth, that lingering clings
Unto the realms from whence it springs ?
May it not chance, that as two friends,
Whose hilar'ous span of meeting ends,
Linger, and stand, as loth to say
Their farewell words, and turn away ;
So the bright beings of seraph birth
Cling to the souls new clad in earth,
Whispering the yet remembered strain,
Pointing from earth to heaven again,
As if to lure them thence to fly
Back to their common home, the sky.

Idle the thought ! Oh ! would that we
(Boastful and proud although we be)
Gave to *our* creed the faith that they
In their wild legends oft display !
Would, when at some ill deed or word,
Conscience, our angel guard, hath stirred,
We with their humble, child-like fear
Did but incline our hearts, and hear ;
So, floating down Time's shoreless sea
To the vast gulf, Eternity,

As we began, so might we end,
And heavenly things with earthly blend ;
Till, to our dying eyes revealed,
Stood those bright forms, no more concealed,
Thronging the gates of heaven's high dome,
To bid the wanderer welcome home.

1851.

Consumption.

“ THY will be done, thy will be done ! ”
 God grant thee strength to say,
 Wan mother, in whose anguished sight
 A daughter fades away !

We watched her pale and wasted face,
 We turned a greedy ear
 To every proffered cure, till doubt
 Gave way to sickening fear.

We felt, we knew, there was no hope,
 Yet, as at times a trace
 Of flickering colour tinged her cheek,
 Hope, yet *scarce* hope, found place.

We could not bring ourselves to deem
 The last dread change so nigh ;
 We could not, would not, bear to think
 That one so young must die.

And every word, and look, and deed
Of childish work or play
Rose up at once into our minds
As though 'twere yesterday.

Then came the simple wiles, to hide
Each pain, however bad ;
The faint, wan smile, the cheerful word,
So exquisitely sad.

And day by day, as still she strove
To raise some hope again,
It seemed as if we never knew
How dear she was till then.

At last that little chamber's quiet
Was deeper than before ;
And every still small sound of life
Therein was heard no more.

A passing bell—deep, trustful prayers,
A mound of grassy sod ;
The dust to dust had back returned,
The spirit unto God.

1851.

As a dead Man, clean out of Mind.

WE met to bear the dead away
 To its appointed place,
 And gloom and awe their shadow flung
 On every mourner's face.

Again we met—that room was decked
 To greet a careless band,
 And where the foot of Grief had passed,
 There Folly took her stand.

So soon, so soon!—alas, for thee,
 The much-beloved, the young!
 Thy place is gone, thy very name
 Unuttered by each tongue.

So soon, so soon! yet there *was* one
 With whom thou hadst thy part;
 Wherein thou hast, will ever have,
 Thy shrine—a mother's heart.

1851.

The Vigil of the New Year.

[THERE is a superstition in some of the northern counties, that those who watch at midnight, in the churchyard, on New Year's Eve, shall see the spirits of those lately dead, and the forms of those about to die, pass, and vanish in the church porch.]

A GUSTY night—the wind and rain
 Beat on the old churchyard,
 And in the elemental strife
 The year seemed dying hard.

Wild, stormy, dark—yet still we watched,
 To see them gliding by ;
 The shroud-clad spirits of the dead,
 And those about to die !

No form came up, no spirit passed
 Within the gray porch door ;
 The midnight stroke tolled out, was gone,
 And all was as before.

No form came up ; but when returned,
 They asked us how we sped ;
 It seemed as if on each had passed
 The shadow of the dead.

No jest, no laugh,—at last one spoke
In grave and altered tone,
“What, if among those forms we sought,
We had espied our own?”

Each looked on each—no need to tell
How all had thought the same;
A sympathetic shudder ran
At once through every frame.

Truth, truth! although we knew it not,
Nor saw the shadows there,
Through every heart that hour had passed
The spirits of the air.

Silently spake they; yet, we trust
Not vainly, as they said,
“Brother, perchance, the message waits
To join thee to the dead!”

So come they ever unto souls
Yet prisoned in the clay:
Not in the panoply of death,
Or visible array;

Not with the outward eye of man,
The spirit-world hath part:
Those who would see their shadows pass
Must watch them in their heart.

The Yew.

OLD, funereal yew !
 How thick thy branches spread
 Upon their grass-grown graves,
 The long forgotten dead !
 Like to a worn pall waving,
 And flapping in the wind.

Old, funereal yew !
 Thy glories are departed
 With those thou bendest o'er,
 The true, the English hearted ;
 Like oars in water laving,
 That leave no trace behind.

Old, funereal yew !
 Thou still with death find'st grace,
 Not on the foughten field,
 But in a humbler place.
 O'er time-gnawed bones low bending,
 And iron scraps rusting red.

Old, funereal yew !
 Thy spoilers are laid low,
 Death hath lopped off thy loppers,
 The bowman feeds the bow !
 And thou, thy wrongs amending
 Art battenning on the dead.

1849.

The Fairy Seat at Cork-beg.

IT was a cloudless summer's night,
 A quiet scene of shade and light,
 When, by chance, my wandering feet
 Bore me to the Fairy seat.
 Beneath me far, with sullen swell,
 The broad Atlantic rose and fell ;
 Around me wide, with cold, grey sheen,
 The moonbeams tipped each rugged scene ;
 The wailing wind, the billow's roll
 With pleasing sadness filled my soul ;
 I stood and mused, I scarce knew why,
 On themes that raised, unchecked, the sigh,
 Till, by degrees, with sleep o'erprest,
 Within that bower I sank to rest.

I know not, then, if still I slept,
 Or if my sense some elf-spell kept ;
 But whilst I lay in slumber bound,
 Through all the air a still, sweet sound
 Passed swift, as if the starry sky
 Was filled with unknown minstrelsy.

Each wave-worn stone, each floweret's bell
Sent forth some inmate from its cell ;
Each wreathed sea-weed with spray bedight,
Gave back a flickering, elfin light.
I saw them come, the fairy rout,
In many a linked band drawn out ;
Elves and fays, and sylphids there
Gliding softly in mid-air.
Bright and glittering was their march,
As, after summer rain, the arch,
The heaven-born arch, that bending laves
Its point within the glowing waves.
Swift they pass, as swift descend,
Around the seat they circling bend.
“ Tenant of the garish day,”
Thus they said, or seemed to say ;
“ Mortal, who hath dared to spy
Sights ne'er seen by mortal eye,
Be thy limbs with faintness bound,
Touch not, stir not, breathe no sound,
Till our queen, at midnight's hour,
Bear thee to the fairy bower.”
Thrice they spoke the fairy charm,
Thrice I stirred in wild alarm :
Voice and strength had passed away ;
Nerveless on the ground I lay.
Soon a bright and sudden blaze
Flashed o'er every moonlit maze,
And afar a silvery shout
Over hill and cliff rang out,—

“Haste ye here, ye spirits fair,
Dwellers in the sea, the air,
Soon again will day be seen,
Haste ye, greet the Fairy Queen.”
Up, in many a shell-wrought boat
The azure water-spirits float;
Instant from the heaving main
Echoeth the choral strain.

From the green bed of the ocean upstarting,
Borne on the billow-foam hither we speed;
White spray is dashing,
With elfin light flashing,
Haste ye, and hither the fairy bride lead.

Come from your deep haunts, the bridal song chaunting,
Sprites of the forest, the fountain, the mead!
Beauty is blushing
With shame and joy flushing:
Haste ye, and hither the fairy bride lead.

The song has ceased, and o'er the tide
Swift the ocean spirits glide;
As the grey mist-wreaths that fly
In many a shape that mocks the eye,
O'er the hills at break of day,
Thus they pass and melt away.
Instant, like a falling star,
Gleams a meteor from afar,
Spiked with many a lurid flame,
High in air it rushing came;

Softly opening in midway,
Down the glittering sparkles stray.
Each a warm-eyed, dusky sprite,
Crowned and wreathed with fire-fly light.
Struggling with the glowing train,
Circled in a red rose chain,
In the midst a boy they bore,
Captive from the Eastern shore.
Flushed and crimson was his cheek,
As the opening May-day's streak ;
Soft and glistening beamed his eye,
As the genial April sky.
Purple wing and bee-strung bow
Well the treacherous godhead show ;
Elfin sprite and mortal heart
Feel alike his honied dart.
Round and round the laughing crew,
Light in mimic triumph flew ;
Sweetly, as a silver bell,
Thus their choral notes they swell :

“ In a lotus cup, sly hiding,
Down our sacred Gunga gliding,
First we spied our urchin toy.
Softly as the panther creeping
Where our beauteous prize lay sleeping,
Panting, pouting, struggling, weeping,
Fast we bound the truant boy.

“ Seek ye not from bonds to free him,
These who loose shall quickly see him
From their longing eyes depart.
Heed ye not his mute appealing ;
If ye pity him when kneeling,
Through the throbbing bosom stealing,
He will surely touch the heart.

“ Sylphs, beware his glowing kisses,
Venom'd pleasures, treacherous blisses ;
In their honey lurks a sting.
Would ye keep the heart from grieving ?
Be not, prythee, too believing,
Love at best is but deceiving ;
Not for nought he wears a wing.”

A plaintive, wild, and stirring strain,
An echoing shout—again, again !
With downcast eye, but regal mien,
I saw her come, the Elfin Queen.
In June when flowers awake anew,
Hast marked the opening rosebud's hue,
The inmost leaflet of the flower
Wet with spray of the new dropped shower,
Of tint intense, yet pure and meek ?
Such was her fair and rounded cheek.
Hast marked the larch in early spring
Her bursting buds to the sunbeam fling,

Tipped with fresh and lovely green,
Studded with crimson knots between ?
Such the robes that flickering played
Round the limbs of the Elfin maid.
A wreath of glow-worm light she wore,
A silvery wand her right hand bore.
She touched the rock whereon I lay,
Leapt from the stone a vivid ray;
She touched the rock—a gulf profound
Cleft apart in the solid ground.
Shouts of glee and gibbering mirth,
Down, down to the middle earth,
Clinging, clutching, and tempest-tossed,
Striving ever, yet onwards forced ;
Down, down to the inmost cell,
Where the gnomes of darkness dwell;
Up, as the autumn breezes curl
Withered leaves in eddying swirl;
On, through the fields of boundless space,
Many a wild and mocking face ;
Air above, around, below,
Arrowy sleet and driving snow,
Sudden bursts of lurid fire,
Shriekings, yells, and words of ire ;
On to the Elfin realms we came,
Plunged in a sea of molten flame—
A strain of music thrilling sweet—
We stood at the Elfin monarch's feet.

There is a legend often told
By wandering seers in days of old,
That fays who range our earth and sky
Were glorious spirits once on high :
But since in heaven's revolt no part
They played, nor showed a loyal heart,
Unfit in realms above to dwell,
Unfit to mate with sprites of hell ;
Not wholly cursed, not blessed, they dree
A restless, vague uncertainty.
And so it seemed, for on that face
Shone flickering yet a seraph grace,
Some hues of heaven, some stains of grief,
As if the spirit sought relief
In revellings wild, yet mourned to see
His changed and fallen dynasty.
“ Mortal ! ” these the words he said :
“ Child of earth, whose daring head
Slumbered on the hallowed ground
Where the fay may circle round,
At the stroke of midnight's hour
Wast thou given to our power ;
Here a captive thou must stay
Till the fearful Judgment day.
Yet, if now we grant thee grace
Back to wander to thy place,
Touched with fond and vain desire
Of the poet's sacred fire,

Thou must bide the scoff and jeer,
Folly's laugh, the dunce's sneer ;
Ever yearning after fame,
All obscure shall be thy name.
Pass thou on ; behold a sight
Never seen by mortal wight ;
Back returning, pray to heaven
That the fay may be forgiven."
They thronged me round, the fairy crew,
Each organ touched with fairy dew ;
On every sense there came new light—
On taste, on hearing, touch, and sight.
I passed me on through deep green spots,
Through woodland dells and wave-worn grots,
Until from far, across the plain,
The winds brought up this wailing strain :

“ Our pleasant homes on earth,
The lands that gave us birth,
Our joyous hours of mirth,
Lost, lost for ever !

“ Alas, for broken trust,
Alas, for sins of lust,
Foul deeds of mortal dust ;
Lost, lost for ever !

“ Memory grieveth sore,
Even hope is o'er,
We may return no more ;
Lost, lost for ever !”

Then saw I those, who in the hour
When, for a space, the fays have power
Their restless wanderings to begin,
Were found by them in act of sin.
Each form was human to the waist,*
But on that trunk was deftly placed
The upper part of serpent, newt,
Or some unclean and evil brute ;
Whatever thing in fairy sight,
Had most of that same appetite
Which swayed their senses in the hour
That gave them up to fairy power.
Yet not of sense or human mind
Were they bereft, but wept to find
Their former beauties thuswise changed,
Themselves from every hope estranged ;
Yet, by that selfsame glamour held,
Each twofold form was there compelled,
Low bending down, to seek and find
His loathsome food, each after kind.
With hatefullest disrelish there
They cropped the weed and pasture bare ;
Of slime and carrion, foul and black,
With quivering nostrils, eyes turned back,
They ate, and shuddering o'er their meat—
Paused, but again to shrink and eat.

* Homer's *Odyssey*, book x.

Through this wild scene of dole and din,
This very hell for petty sin,
I passed me quick, and came to where
Sweet infant forms of upper air,
In flowery groves of rosy sheen,
In sunlit glades of emerald green,
Unchecked, untended, ceaseless kept
Their revellings shrill, or wearied, slept.
Shadowy seemed each glowing child,
Forms that the stedfast eye beguiled ;
As a sunbeam that has strayed
Through the leaves, on a forest glade,
Shimmers and dances here and there,
Midway flitting 'twixt earth and air ;
Ever thus the laughing crew,
Flickering, mocked the earnest view.
Now, for a moment full in sight,
Now, in a gleaming flash of light
Utterly lost, confused, and blent
With the cœrulean firmament.
These are they of mortal birth,
Snatched away from the upper earth ;
If the mother, in hour of woe,
Spiritual hope and help forego :
If seven weeks shall pass away,
Ere for the new-born babe she pray,
Coming in at the midnight hour,
Then, in part, the fays have power ;
Yet, although they have their will,
They may do the child no ill.

Borne away to fairy land,
It shall join the happy band ;
Peace and joy are for its soul,
For the parents, ceaseless dole.
Though the outward form be there,
Like to child of upper air,
Yet an evil-working sprite
Dwelleth in it from that night ;
They shall see it, day by day,
Wither, pine, and waste away ;
Work its little playmates harm,
Give to all around alarm,
Till the hand of early death
Cutteth short its impish breath.
I could have gazed for ever there,
On those young forms so passing fair,
But swift a hid, resistless power
Impelled me onwards from their bower.
The woods and meadows passed away,
The rosy tints paled out to grey ;
I stood within a shamble, wide,
Hung round with flesh on every side ;
Yet was each loathsome mass I viewed
With power of speech and life endued.
Gibbering, panting, heaving fast,
They seemed to mock me as I passed ;
Great fish-like eyes from every joint
Stared out, and fingers strove to point ;
A sickening, faint, and fleshy smell
Upon the upturned nostrils fell ;

A curdling stream of clotted gore
Crept slowly round the noisome floor,
And in the midst, as on a throne,
On purpling carcase, whitening bone,
Sat Ephialtes,* hideous hag,
Girt with a single squalid rag ;
Orange-spotted, like a newt,
Was the skin of the unclean brute.
Like to loathsome toad squatting
On some carrion foul and rotting ;
There the evil phantom dwelt,
Bane of banquets, often felt
By the rich, luxurious wight
Who will feast him high at night.
Round her seat there went, slow crawling,
Chattering, yelling, muttering, squalling.
Many a foul, fantastic shape,
Funeral pall, and cat, and ape ;
Pallid faces thronged the room,
Undistinguished forms of gloom
From the corners, here and there,
Peered, with long, dishevelled hair.
Quickly the hag espied me out,
Summoneth up her rabble rout,
Leaped her down from off her throne,
Muttering out a palsied groan ;
Circling round on either hand,
Thus in chorus yelled her band:—

* The nightmare.

“ Thou art in the realms of the midnight queen,
Whose power is over all ;
On the whirlwind blast she rideth fast
To the stately banquet hall.
Ho ! ho !
Well ye know
We have a spell to work thee woe !

“ Look, look on the piles of slaughter here—
All died that man might eat ;
When not content with the blessings sent,
Then *we* serve up his meat.
Ho ! ho !
Whether or no
Mortals will it, our power they know.

“ Thou hast come to the realms of the midnight’s
queen,
But thou shalt not depart.
Then bow thee straight, for the night-hag’s weight
Must ride upon thine heart.
Ho ! ho !
Down ye go,
We have a charge to work thee woe !”

As a swarm of wasps, whose nest the share
Of the plough has left all torn and bare,
Spring from the startled rustic’s feet,
Striking and wounding all they meet,

Thus on me leapt the evil crew ;
Smelt they the smell of fairy dew :
Back recoiling from off their prey,
All the dark phantoms pass away ;
Again at the Elfin monarch's throne,
Scathless and scared, I stood alone.

'Twas a sight most fair and strange to see,
That vision of fairy majesty:
One while like to the mermaid's cave,
Deep in the depths of the ocean wave ;
Ceiling and wall swam in the sight,
Dripping with floods of azure light ;
One while a warm and reddening gleam
Tints each form with a rosy beam,
Like the rays of the setting sun,
When for the day his race is run.
The sprites of the forest, the earth, the air,
The Naiad, the Indian fay, were there ;
All who on earth that selfsame night
Met at the fairy seat my sight,
Long drawn out, in a garish band,
Gathered around on either hand.
Lately a captive, now a king,
High in the centre of the ring,
Saw I a form upon the throne,
Standing, in triumph, all alone.
The king of the Elfin land, the queen
Girt with her robes of fairy green,

All, as at once, with one consent,
Low at the shrine of Cupid bent,
Hymning before his sapphire fane
Praises and prayer in such like strain:

“ Far-shooting archer god,
Sitting on high,
Ruler of mortals,
Lord of the sky;
Cupid, whose empire
Is over us all,
Be thou propitious
To Oberon’s call.

“ Come not, as oft of old,
Bringing fierce strife.
Come not with earthly
Bickerings rife;
Prone and submissive,
Before thee we fall;
Be thou propitious
To Oberon’s call.”

I saw the laughing godhead’s eye
Glisten with hidden meaning sly;
Never a word he spoke, but sprung
Up from the throne, and passing, flung

Down at the monarch's feet a scroll,
These were its words, and these the whole :
“ Greeting and health, most loving sprite !
Fare thou the same as mortal wight.”

Quickly I turned to gaze upon
The glittering bands, but all were gone ;
Palace and elf had passed away.
I woke in the fairy seat—'twas day.

1841.

Congenial Spirits.



How rarely in this world of ours we find
 A soul in all things answering to our own ;
 Heart echoing back to heart, mind unto mind ;
 These are not, or, at best, but scanty known.
 And yet it is not that the soul would keep
 Itself withdrawn in solitary rest ;
 The yearning to be loved, to love, is deep,
 Most deep implanted in the human breast.
 We see its germ even in the little child,
 Fondling, with real love, its simple toys ;
 We see it more, when creatures tame or wild,
 As years flit by, are all to girls and boys.
 Nor yet in manhood stifled, though it shrink
 More back into itself. The captive pent
 Within the dungeon, though he mourns to think
 All hope of freedom banished, yet has bent,
Will bend his love unto some trifle there ;
 A weed, an insect, rather than endure
 That loneliness of heart, that dead despair,
 Which none can banish, and no time can cure.
 But man in social intercourse with man
 Rejects the good he has not learned to prize ;
 He feels, but deems it weakness, views life's span,

Not with his own, but with another's eyes,
And moulds his heart upon their model :—prone,
Too prone to shrink back from the heartless sneer,
Too weak, too proud (be't what it may) to own
His natural feelings, and declare them dear.
Scarce two minds think alike, but wherefore feign
An apathy we feel not ? wherefore blight
Feelings we know not of with our disdain ?
Brother, walk in thy path as thou hast light,
Leave me to follow mine.—One common weal
We cannot hold, yet in thy strength mock not.
Thou hast the smoother, easier path ; to feel
Too keenly is no enviable lot.

1851.

G r o w n O l d.



A SCENTED leaf, a withered flower,
 A ribbon scrap, a glove :
 Inglorious records of the hour
 When we could trust and love !

A backward glance at olden days,
 A smile, perchance a sigh,
 A transient thought, a listless gaze.
 And so we fling them by.

And so we fling them by, as rife
 With folly or with pain ;
 Yet many a one would give a life
 To live their hours again.

1860.

Marriage de Convenience.

SHE stood by the altar coldly,
And calmly spoke her part;
And she gave, unmoved and boldly,
Her hand, but not her heart!

On earth there were words of gladness
To greet the purchased name,
In heaven were tears and sadness
Over a sister's shame.

1860.

The Knight's Ransom.

A PAYNIM chief to a knight has gone
In donjon where he lay,
“What wilt thou give for freedom,
Thou Christian warrior, say?”

“I have silver and gold in England,
And lands full fair to see;
All that I have, for freedom
Will I freely give to thee.”

“Oh, I will none of thy gold, sir Knight,
Or ransom from thy lands;
But I will have of thy ladie-love
One of her lily hands.”

“Though I should bide in Palestine
Until my dying hour,
Never shall such a tale be told
Within my ladie's bower.

“ Though I should rot in donjon keep,
Till such a ransom be ;
Ow're God forbid,” quoth Sir Grimbald,
“ That she should give it thee !”

All this then heard his trusty squire,
And he has ta'en the bent,
And over the seas to fair England
Full speedily he went.

And when he came to fair England,
He rode o'er moss and moor,
Until he came to his liege ladie,
And stood without her door.

“ Now Christ thee save thou trusty squire,
What news dost thou bring me,
What of my lord in Palestine,
Across the raging sea ?”

“ The tidings I bring thee of thy lord
Will cost thee many a tear,
But the word I have concerning thee,
Is worst of all to hear.

“ Ill speeds my lord in Palestine,
With gyves and fetters tied ;
He lies in the Paynim's donjon keep,
And there he must abide.

“ For they will none of his gold, ladie,
And they will none of his lands,
But they will have for his ransom,
One of thy lily hands ! ”

Pale and wan grew the fair ladie,
Yet stately up stood she,
And, “ Ave Maria, help ! ” she said,
“ This, mine extremity.

“ Well hast thou played thy part, good squire,
And shall not I play mine ?
Now, God forbid, that a Christian knight
In Paynim-hold should pine !

“ Boot, and saddle, and mount, and ride,
Thou shalt bear back with thee
The price that the cruel Paynim chief
This day hath craved of me.

“ And say to my lord, in Palestine,
To set thee free, thy wife
Would give, not only one of her hands,
But if needs were, her life ! ”

As she hath said so hath she done,
Or ever the sun did wane,
And she hath won back from Holy Land
Her own dear knight again.

And e'en to this day in Cowarne church,
 Their sculptured forms are seen ;
A knight in his harness all yelad,
 A dame of saintly mien.

One hand is folded across her breast,
 And (if men rightly read),
The other is coupled at the wrist,
 In memory of her deed.

And ever and still the tale is told,
 Where minstrel's tale is rife,
How the knight of the ilk, Sir Grimbald,
 Was ransomed by his wife.

1851.

A s t a r t e.

I KNEW her in her youth, ere yet
 The hand of time had lightly set
 Its seal to womanhood ;
 And even then she seemed to me
 One formed above the herd to be
 For evil or for good :

One, in whose veins ran liquid fire,
 Whom most would love, and more admire—
 A yet unsullied page,
 Whereon a master-hand might trace
 The lineaments of every grace
 From childhood unto age.

So passed she by—but when I heard
 That she was wed, a feeling stirred
 Within my heart—of fear.
 An equal or superior mind
 I knew in her would surely find
 A helpmate ever dear :

But if her lot with one were cast,
Who, when his love's first flush had passed.

Would coldly turn away,
I felt she would not tamely bear
The altered tone, the wild despair,
Of that all evil day.

As, when the rising sun at dawn
Gilds the grey streaks of early morn
With reddening hues of light ;
Black clouds full oft come up that day,
And, gathering round, obscure each ray
Too prematurely bright.

Even so with her ; a season passed
Too radiantly fair to last,
And then the soul awoke
As from a dream of all things dear,
To prove how fearfully, how near,
The muttering thunder broke.

Alas ! the bolt of sin hath sped !
It smote the self-devoted head,
She fell, to rise no more :
Down bowed beneath the furious gale,
A nameless bark with shivered sail,
Lies stranded on the shore.

To everything there is a Season.

To everything there is a season.

Eccl. iii. 1.

THEY err who deem that life was sown
Within man's frame for life alone,
And that all else with youth is flown.

Who to one level all would bring,
And fancy's visions from them fling,
Harping upon a single string.

Who turn with sneering, scornful gaze,
From lover's sighs, and poet's lays,
As follies of our early days.

In close cocoon of self enrolled
Their *nobler* aims are quickly told ;
To gather, or to lavish gold.

They err : the lover's discontent,
The poet's vision heavenwards sent,
Have not for all the same intent.

A man may love, and yet be wise,
Be sober-minded, and yet prize
Nature in true poetic guise.

The lonely shepherd, on whose sight
The starry hemispheres of night
Gleam with a strange, uncertain light.

The wanderer on the Arctic main,
The humblest tiller of the plain,
May feel, yet scarce feel *how*, the strain

Of voiceless music, as they gaze
On God's immeasurable ways,
That lead the heart to prayer and praise.

By nature poets still, although
In utterance of ideas slow,
And scant of words to give them flow.

That life is real who may deny,
A blank scroll given from on high,
For all to fill up ere they die ;

With stains and spots soon interspersed ;
But God, who formed us at the first,
Sends of the best as well as worst—

A mingled lot—and yet the mind
Who rightly seeks, may mostly find
The evil and its cure combined.

Moreover, as in this our earth
Scarce two are found alike from birth,
In outward form or inward worth,

Even so that subtle essence blent
 With every frame in wise intent,
 Finds not a one or selfsame vent.

We view our lot with varying eyes,
 And oft the boons that some despise
 We see another chiefly prize.

Nor only so ; at times we find
 A second self within the mind,
 Mysteriously undefined,

And yet a certainty—else why
 In the same man do we espy
 Such varying natures bud and die ?

One while the grosser soul hath sway,
 Chasing ethereal dreams away,
 Living but to the present day ;

One while the subtler essence wakes,
 Mounts up, her every fetter breaks,
 And over all dominion takes.

One touch, the sluggish, dormant brain
 Starts as from death to life again,
 Kindling in many an ancient strain ;

Old impulses rise up anew,
 And Hope's own azure opening through,
 Lends to the whole its proper hue.

One touch, again the visions fly,
Earth-mists again steam up on high,
And heaven-born fancies wane and die.

Such is man's life, and who shall say,
When either phase hath passed away,
"I have outlived the happier day."

The slackened bow retains its force,
The ever-bended waxeth worse,
Nor drives the arrow on its course.

The mightiest stream that we can name
Is not in summer drought the same
As when the winter torrents came.

Lay up the moral in thy breast,
And prize as meet the old behest,
"Whatever is, is surely best."

1852.

Distance.

DISTANT, far distant—oh, for those who love
 There is a vagueness in the very word,
 A dread uncertainty that makes us pause
 Even in our happier hours—some chord hath stirred
 In memory's shadowy, moonlit halls that finds
 An echo in the heart ; and so we glide
 Down from the present to the past, and float
 Backwards with time, as with an ebbing tide.
 And we recall the hours, and in their train
 Old shapes come up, dim, mist-veiled faces rise,
 A host of half-remembered, once loved forms,
 Looking us through with their sad, earnest eyes.

Distant, far distant from us ! and the while
 We think not of them, it may be, they lie
 Stretched on the bed of pain, and, scorching hot,
 In fever's red delirium, toss and cry
 To those who cannot hear. Perchance their souls,
 Even now, are bending o'er us, and the air,
 Balm-fraught to *us*, fanned by the last life-breath
 Of those for whom we have no thought, no care.
 Not that their memories are from our hearts
 Wholly estranged or banished, but this life

Brings daily cares and turmoil in its wake,
And we must play our parts. Hopes, wants, and strife
Press hard upon us, and the hand of Time,
Slowly, but surely working, doth, in part,
Loosen the ties of blood, the silver cords,
That early friendship twined about our heart.

One leaf, and then another, stealing down
From waning summer's thick-clad boughs, are passed
Unheeded, unremarked, yet still they be
Presagers of the time, when, showering fast,
Autumn shall pour them, withered, on the ground.
So fares it with man's heart : a change comes on,
Gradual at first, then faster, till we stand
Alone, bereaved—scarcely knowing what is gone,
Yet feeling we are changed. Life's winter, age,
Nipping the greener blossoms of the heart,
Ripening us for the grave, in wise intent
That calmer, at God's hour, we may depart.

1852.

The Wind.

“ WAILING, low wailing, melancholy wind,
 Thou wakest thoughts of grief with every blast ;
 Hast thou no notes of joy, no sounds beseeming,
 For those whose happy hours are not yet past,
 Thou melancholy Wind ? ”

“ I come, fast sweeping o’er this earth of thine ;
 Whence should I gather notes like those ye seek ?
 The few joy-notes I glean are lost in moanings,
 The heart-worn moanings of the oppressed and
 weak ;

These, these alone I find.”

“ Then sound thy trumpet-blasts, for thou art free ;
 Roar like the ocean lashed by thee to rage ;
 Go forth, and bid the slaves, as one uprising,
 Write down in blood their names on history’s page.
 Go forth, they wait for thee.”

“ Myriads of shuddering souls are ever speeding
 Forth on my pinions into boundless space ;
 I bear them onwards, I, the spirit-ridden,
 Each one unto his own appointed place ;
 How canst thou call me free ? ”

“ Dost thou, too, breathe of death, low wailing Wind :

I deemed thee but the playmate of the flowers ;

A fitful, wandering sprite, in winter grieving,

In springtime pregnant but with genial showers :

Hast *thou* a charnel breath ? ”

“ Change, ceaseless change, is written on the world,

Mark all that voiceless, fixed decree obeying,

Time hasting onwards to eternity,

Man, beast, tree, flower, each at his hour decaying,

Aye, all things breathe of death.”

1849.

The Battle of Crecy.



A SOUND as of an army
 Who march with might and main,
 A sound of foot and horsemen
 Quick tramping o'er the plain.

We stayed our bands at Crecy.
 That day the foe had fill
 Of lusty push of pikemen,
 Of English bow and bill!

First came the Genoese men :
 Uncase we each his bow ;
 And down, as lightning-stricken,
 The Genoese men go.

Each crushed back on his fellow.
 They might not stand or flee ;
 Such slaughter as on that day
 Great pity 'twas to see !

Up spake then Count Alencon,
 “Curse on these shrinking slaves;
Ride at them, gallant horsemen,
 And slay the coward knaves!”

Up rushed the mail-clad horsemen;
 We bent our bows again,
And horse and mail-clad horseman
 Lay rolling on the plain.

The cannoneers on that day
 Shot sharp, as all might know;
Our bowmen they rushed forward,
 And cast aside the bow.

Then down went stout Alencon,
 Lorraine, and Bourbon's duke,
The Earl of Blois, and Flanders,
 Who ne'er the fight forsook.

Spake then Bohemia's blind king
 (A woeful man was he),
“Alack, alack, for France, that
 This day should ever be.

“Now lead me to the battle,
 A knight on either side!”
He rushed among the billmen,
 And so right kingly died.

Now joy to England's monarch,
And glory to our prince ;
Such victory as Crecy
Was ne'er before or since !

And honour to our bowmen,
Who stemmed the battle's tide,
Three kings stood not before them,
Three monarchs in their pride !

1847.

The Banshee.

'TWIXT heaven and earth, like a fleecy cloud.

The wailing Banshee flies ;
No spirit of health is she, I ween,
No sprite of evil with pale, blue sheen,
To startle the wanderer's eyes.

Yet often her fitful croon at eve
Falls on the shuddering ear ;
Woe, woe, to that mansion's inmates where
She waileth and weeps in upper air—
The shadow of death is near.

To many an ancient hearth some spell
Has bound the wandering sprite,
And when aught of ill befalls that race,
At some casement high her corpse-like face
Peers in, an ominous sight.

Oft as a hag is seen her form,
Oft as a maiden fair ;
But fair or foul, her errand is one :
Welcome tidings she bringeth to none,
Save to him who must despair.

1839.

Gossamer Hall.

GOSSAMER HALL, I often wonder now
 If thou art as of old, or if the hand
 Of that sprite called Improvement, from the brow
 Of Cork-beg's cliff hath swept thee to the sand.
 And yet I think thou art, for there was one
 Who loved to linger in thy rubble screen,
 Basking and joying in the morning's sun,
 Whose memory is inwoven in thy being:
 An old, good-hearted man. I see him yet
 In his bright buttoned coat, or blue cloak flung
 Loose on his shoulders, toddle down, and sit.
 The merriest of us all, and we were young.

Peace to his kindly soul! For he is gone
 Where we must one day follow in our turn,
 And years have slid by, and time rolled on,
 Since last I trod those paths embossed with fern;
 And many a change hath been: some are grown old,
 Some gone, I know not whither, but each place
 Comes often up before me, and I hold
 Still dear to me each well-remembered face.
 I too am changed, but not in all. Old friends.
 Believe me, ye have yet with me a part;
 God keep me so! and grant me, till life ends,
 Memory's best, rarest gem—a grateful heart.

P s y c h e.

WHERE hath the soul her seat ?
 Where in this earthly frame
 Finds she a temple meet
 For her up-pointed flame ?
 Viewless, all unconfined,
 Yet to one end designed,
 Is the immortal Soul.

Askest thou where she be ?
 Thou mayst not find her throne :
 Let it suffice to thee,
 She dwelleth not alone.
 Two forms, one fair as light,
 One dusk as ebon night,
 Watch ever o'er the Soul.

One weaves a starry crown
 Of that thou doest well ;
 One forgeth, bending down,
 Thine ill to gyves of hell.
 Gazing with earnest eyes,
 Silently each one plies
 Her labour for the Soul.

Ah, careless one, and slow
To change this fleshly heart !
When wilt thou learn to know
And choose the better part !

Night clouds are gathering fast,
And who, when life is past,
Shall claim thee, O my Soul !

1852.

Song of Gnerpa and Hubba.

THE WEAVING OF THE DANES' RAVEN STANDARD.



We twine not the white robe for
 Maiden's adorning,
 Not the mantle for banquet, or
 Blithe bridal morning.
 Our fingers, quick weaving,
 Keep pace with our song,
 And the distant isles, grieving,
 Shall mourn for it long.
 On, on o'er billows hoary !
 On, on to death or glory !
 Long shalt thou live in story,
 Swart flag of victory !

Forth from your dark haunts, ye
 Spirits of might !
 Forth, forth ye fatal Three,
 Dwellers in night ;
 Why do ye linger,
 Stern Givers of doom ?
 A Reimkennar's finger
 Now weaves at the loom.

Loud is the tempest beating ;
Forth, forth the night is fleeting,
Forth, forth—we give ye greeting,
Dread Powers of destiny !

Now darker and thicker
Dun clouds fill the air,
And brighter and quicker
The red lightnings glare.
I hear ye ! low wailing
Ye steam from the ground,
On bat-wing up-sailing,
Ye circle around.
Weave, weave with hasty finger,
Weave, weave whilst yet they linger,
Gift thou for bold Vikinger,
Swart flag of victory !

The groaning loom shaketh,
With magic spells rife,
The war raven waketh,
It starteth to life !
Dread gift of fierce Odin,
Go forth in thy might !
With black wing foreboding
Of conquest or flight.
Faint, hot, the scents of slaughter
Steam up from yon blue water !
On, Denmark's vengeful daughter,
On, on to victory !

The Mistletoe.



THE mistletoe plant in days of yore
 Was famed in the heathen Druid's lore ;
 Her boughs were cropped with sickles of gold,
 But oh ! the gatherer's hand was old.
 Far better the use she now doth know,
 When Christmas biddeth the brown ale flow,
 For the young and the fair she now doth grow,
 Hurrah ! for old England's mistletoe.

Her place is the old baronial hall ;
 She hangs from the peasant's and yeoman's wall :
 He knows but little who knows not this,
 Who plucks a berry may claim a kiss.
 The holly beads like the red lips glow,
 The mistletoe pearls like the teeth below ;
 What matter, though maids sometimes say " No !
 Hurrah ! for old England's mistletoe.

Oh ! never may fashion's frown beguile
The mistletoe's use from this our isle ;
Though many a custom has passed away,
Hold fast the custom of Christmas day !
Waes hael* to high and low !
Christmas biddeth the brown ale flow !
With spiky leaf and berry of snow,
Hurrah ! for old England's mistletoe.

1848.

* Waes hael—Saxon for wassail.

The Old Dutch Bible.

A HUGE old volume, sullied
By Time's embrowning tints,
With massive clasp and covers,
With thumb'd and tattered prints.

Man's Eden and the Temple
Squared out by Dutchman's law,
And Easterns in the fashion
Of William of Nassau.

And yet, methinks, I mind me
Of days, as of a dream,
When all those quaint engravings
Were other than they seem.

When stories, oft repeated,
Had charms for ever new,
And all those forms and figures
Were living types and true.

Ah, dawn of trustful childhood,
Undimmed by care and grief!
We lack, perchance, thy brightness,
But more thy pure belief;

And better, had we perished
Before the years of strife,
If *then* the Tree of Knowledge
O'ershade the Tree of Life.

1860.

Hallowed Ground.



It may be that our love is cold ;
 Whose is not in these iron days,
 When Self is all to young and old,
 And Duty walks on narrowed ways ?
 Our mysteries now are as a tale
 Thrice told ; our holiest shrines are bare,
 And broadening science strips the veil
 From every sign of earth and air ;
 One thing remains—whose eye can bound,
 Whose word can limit Hallowed Ground ?

Where is that spot ?—it is not placed
 Or measured out by human art,
 On every trodden haunt 'tis traced,
 With every lonely nook has part ;
 It rises up within our way :
 To us, perchance, of priceless worth,
 Yet many a fellow-man may say,
 “ I hold it nought but common earth.”
 For in the heart alone is found
 The seal which stamps it Hallowed Ground.

1853.

Footsteps of the Gazelle.

WHEREVER those small hoofs are lightly printed,
There, too, are also traced
Some evil beast's pursuing footsteps dinted *
Upon the sandy waste.

On other wastes than these, with other traces
Such tracks as surely blend,
By lowly paths of Life, by Life's high places,
But what shall be the end ?

The trampled sand, the blood ?—a tale of slaughter,
By voiceless horrors told ?
Or rest beside the green oasis water,
One added to the fold ?

1856.

* A fact.

Rejected.

AN early love rejected,
A trusted one untrue,
A faithful friend neglected :
Old tales, yet ever new !

Slightingly heard when spoken,
Bitterly mourned when known,—
By these the heart is broken.
Or hardened into stone.

1855.

Antediluvian Relics.

No fever in delirium's wildest hour,
No nightmare ever pictured forms more strange,
More hideous, than upon this earth of ours,
Ere Time waxed old, were wont to sport and range.
The visions of old days, the fables quaint
Of Hydra, Geryon, and Stympthalides,
And, later still, the dragon by our Saint
Down-trodden and destroyed ; such tales as these
Bring us almost to deem our fathers' lore
Framed on some record of that primal birth,
Ere Adam from the river-girded shore
Of Paradise, went forth to till the earth.

Wild dost thou deem such fancies ? Never yet
Sprang fabled legend from the brain of man
But had its first root-fibres placed and set
On Fact's granitic rock ; far out of span

Of our weak mortal ken, and buried deep

By that same restless mole, hight Chronos, who
Upcasting in his progress many a heap,

Shall, at the last, return them into view.

It has been so, it will be to the end ;

Last shall in turn be first, in turn, first, last,
Till Time itself shall cease, and, ceasing, blend
Into one whole the Present and the Past.

1853.

Broken-Hearted.



DYING !—the world with all its busy changes

Departing fast away.

Dying !—and memory in her backward ranges

Still fresh as yesterday !

The first, faint flush—the one fixed hope returning

In every place and scene ;

The vain appeal—and oh ! the vainer yearning

For things that *might* have been !

Why should that thought be ever, ever present ?

Her thoughts are not with me ;

Her paths are paths of peace, her life-ways pleasant ;

So may they ever be !

And let the shadow of my dial, waning

Go down on my despair ;

Within the grave these woes may cease from paining,

Find rest : but only *there*.

1857.

Long, long Ago.

LAST night, in emptying out my desk
 I found a lock of hair.
 It had a scent of Rowland's oil,
 And oh ! 't was long and fair,
 Adele !
 And oh ! 't was long and fair !

Yes, surely those were pleasant times,
 When every day we met ;
 Myself an Oxford Johnny Raw,
 And you a young coquette,
 Adele !
 And you a young coquette !

I mind me yet how all began ;
 By chance or by design,
 When first you drew your hand away,
 Then laid it back in mine,
 Adele !
 Then laid it back in mine !

A thrill shot up, from arm to heart
Just sinking with despair ;
I looked into a half-closed eye,
And learned a lesson there,
Adele !
And learned a lesson there !

We walked, we danced, we quarrelled too,
Were reconciled, and then
We parted ; I was false, and you
A flirt with other men,
Adele !
A flirt with other men.

1857.

Runic Chant.

THE FORGING OF THE SWORD.



BLOW, blow, ye heaving bellows, blow !

Ye fiery sparkles, play !

Salt sweat down every limb must flow ;

We forge the sword to-day.

Awake, ye spirits of the slain,

With blood besmeared and dank ;

Rise up, rise up from sea and plain,

And joy you in the clank.

Far distant lands our toil shall know,

When warring kings are met ;

Many a vale where streamlets flow

With redder dew be wet !

Come forth, thou sickle of the grave !

Come forth, thou glowing brand !

Be faithful to the true and brave,

Betray the coward's hand !

Beneath, above, with ringing sound
The red-hot sparkles fly ;
For every flash that gleams around
A tear shall dim some eye.
Aye, beam ye forth as beams the main,
By evening's red sun gilt ;
Full soon a darker, ruddier stain
Shall gild thee to the hilt !
Strike on, strike on ! the steely cling
Shall wake the orphan's moans,
And blows on blows that echoing ring
Be echoed back in groans !

Shine forth, thou sickle of the grave !
Shine forth, thou glowing brand !
Be faithful to the true and brave,
Betray the coward's hand !

Ye spirits of the mighty dead,
Up-starting from the soil,
I hear ye flitting round my head
And gloating on the toil !
Full soon shall in Valhalla's Hall
Fresh bleeding cups be set,
And those who fell and those who fall
In revelry be met.

The work is done. We quench the blade
Within the spell-bound flood !
Be faithful as the hand that made,
Henceforth be quenched in blood !

Go forth, thou sickle of the grave !
Go forth, a warrior's brand !
Be faithful to the true and brave,
Betray the coward's hand !

1842.

Spiritual Pride.



PROUD Pharisee, uplifting high
 Thy cold and unforgiving eye,
 Oh ! why so prompt to mark and spy
 The slips of poor Mortality ?

Art thou so pure ?—the rather then
 Seek to excuse thy fellow-men,
 Labouring to turn them back again,
 Not vaunting o'er their wanderings.

Look to thy soul—her mirror's light
 Shall give thee back a strange, new sight,
 The canker-worm, the rust, the blight,
 And thou in fond security !

Lo ! Pride, who heaven would scale and win,
 Piling her Babel tower within,
 And every stone another's sin
 From summit down to pedestal.

And Hydra-headed Slander near,
Daubing with upas slime thine ear,
Too prone before to catch and hear
Her every breath of calumny.

Satan's own task. The accuser waits
Hard by the portal of life's gates,
His favourite ones, thy chosen mates,
Leading thee on deceitfully.

1853.

The Battle of Poitiers.

LIGHT up the beacon on mountain and tower,
Spread the glad tidings through castle and bower ;
Fallen is France in the power of her might,
Stark lay her bravest in Poitiers' red fight.
Vain was her chivalry's serried array,
Vain was the rush of her gallants that day ;
Full on their ranks came the steely sleet fast,
Back on their fellows the foremost were cast ;
Trampled and crushed in the tumult they lie,
Dastardly shriek they, or gallantly die.
Light up the beacon on mountain and tower,
Spread the glad tidings through castle and bower ;
Long shall our children who follow our fame
Joy in the war cry of Poitiers' proud name.

There were the mighty ones crushed in their might,
There the pursuers were turned back in flight !
What, ho ! ye leaders of Burgundy's line,
Red drip our garments, but not with your wine !
What, ho ! ye gallants, o'er mountain and plain
Fiercely ye followed, now turn ye again !
Light up the beacon on mountain and tower,
Spread the glad tidings through castle and bower ;
Shout for the brave ones who, scorning to yield,
Victors are hasting from Poitiers' red field.

1843.

Incipient Madness.



I HEAR them say my brain is crazed,
 And sometimes I believe it true,
 For often I myself amazed
 Start at the deeds I long to do.
 It is not love, it is not grief,
 Or lack of that wherewith to live ;
 I have enough, or, if relief
 Were needed, I have friends to give.

And I am loved, if love we call
 Those common ties that link mankind,
 And more than those that chance to all
 I have not, neither look to find.
 Within my veins I feel the taint ;
 It throbs, and works its silent way ;
 Eye seeth not, words cannot paint
 The miseries of that slow decay.

I cannot sleep, or if I rest,

I start from dreams of sin and pain,
And wake to find their stamp impressed
In knots of fire upon my brain.

Then conscious from man's eye I turn,

And what I am not, still would seem ;
But oh ! how much I pant and yearn,
Unseen, unheard, to rave and scream.

Present for ever on my sense

A shadowy something weighs and sits ;
I know not how, or why, or whence,
But it disturbs my failing wits.
It bends me down to pore and gloat
On blackened pools of depth unplumbed,
Whereon the oft-sought corpse may float
Beneath the surface greenly scummed.

It gives the pistol to my grasp,

It turns the cold grey mouth to mine ;
And, fingering at the razor's clasp,
Brings up the thought, " Still these are
thine ! "

I saw it once—'twas in the night—

It came in simple human guise ;
But oh ! the dread Satanic light,
The depth of evil in those eyes !

And ever since, and wheresoe'er
 I turn, those eyes are on me still ;
In deep midnight, in broad sun glare,
 And they at last shall have their will.
My soul revolts, my blood runs chill,
 Yet come it must, the change is nigh :
The one sharp cure for every ill—
 To do, to suffer, and to die.

1853.

On a Seal

ENGRAVED "SIA FELICE."



SIA FELICE!—vainly said
 To mortals sojourning here ;
 Rather be't whispered o'er the dead
 Through trembling Sorrow's tear !
 Vainly, alas ! our life at best
 Is but a dubious day ;
 One while in smiles and sunshine drest,
 One while with scarce a ray.

Sia Felice!—oh, how oft
 Such words pass idly by,
 Leaving alone some bitter pang
 To waken Memory's sigh.
 Go, then, nor dream of happiness
 Thou mayst not, canst not know ;
 Flowers though there be, yet perfect bliss
 Is not for man below.

Sia Felice ! false, frail trust !

Ye hapless sons of clay !

He who first formed us from the dust,

Alone can point the way.

Yes, ours is here the traveller's lot,

Whose country distant lies ;

Far (though we find some resting spot),

Our home's beyond the skies.

1841.

To Aura.

AURA ! thy thoughts and words are, oftentimes,
 Of guardian angels watching o'er the pure,
 Of unseen ministers of good. 'Tis well,
 'Tis meet that thou shouldst dream it, but be sure
 That devils watch them too. The human heart,
 That cage of unclean birds, is not a cell
 Fit for a seraph's home, but reeks and steams
 With pestilential sins, and smacks of hell.
 Have then thy creed—but bear in mind the while,
 Ill eyes are on thee also. Canst thou bear
 Thine every action known, each thought surveyed ?
 Whose are they—angel promptings ? Holy fair !
 Satan peeps laughing out, and thou art weighed,
 And wanting in the balance. Lands at peace
 Need not their mustered armies, neither thou
 Thy guardian seraphs, were not blasts of hell
 Frequent as airs of heaven around thy brow.

1852.

B r e a t h.

“ A breath from its lips making all that mighty difference.”
 Sir E. BULWER LYTTON'S *Night and Morning*.

BURY thy dead, and then
 Go forth to outer light,
 Consort with other men,
 And joy thee in their sight.

Thine is the hoarded store,
 And thou may'st search and pry
 Into the nooks before
 Unsearched by any eye ;

Miniatures, letters, rings,
 Battered, and worn, and old,
 Records of by-gone things,
 Tales that have long been told !

One hand had waved thee off,
 One voice had said thee nay ;
 Wonder, and search, and scoff,
 Thou hast the present day.

Why should their wishes live,
Whose wish is powerless found ?
Nothing have they to give,
Whose place is underground !

Wide as from north to south
A gulf's between ye laid ;
A breath from out the mouth
Can make it, and has made.

1853.

Hesperus.

HEIR of declining day, pale evening star !

Thou firstborn of the venerable night !

I see thy mild beam glistening from afar,

I see it, and rejoicing at the sight,

I bid thee, hail.

What bring'st thou in thy train ?—quiet, holy sleep,

With half-closed pinions stooping down to earth ?

A sabbath to the brain, whose musings keep

Day vigils, ever seething into birth ?

These may not fail.

Thou bringest thoughts of home, the social meal,

The sheltered chimney nook, the bright fireside,

Rest, labour sweetened—but to those who kneel

God-stricken from the pedestal of pride,

Oh ! *not* to those.

What for the wretched ?—sleep hath lost her power,

Hot tears for evening dews are plashing down ;

Fair flatterer ! gladdening but the happy hour,

Let night envelope these ; put off thy crown ;

Respect their woes !

Blood-Black Celline.



WHATEVER was made, was made for good,
 In heaven, in earth, in fire, or flood ;
 All turneth to use, or surely should,
 So, too, doth wine !
 Oh ! what dost thou say to this word of mine ?
 Great are the boons of mighty wine,
 Trickling out from flask or can
 She maketh glad the heart of man
 Doth blood-black wine !

Is thy ladie kind ? Fill up ! Love's eye
 Shineth brighter when wine is nigh :
 Is she cruel ? Fill more ! Love's sigh
 Dies, drowned in wine !
 Oh, what dost thou say to this word of mine ?
 Wassail to him who grows the vine !
 Throwing her ray on friendship's page,
 She is the friend of every age,
 Is blood-black wine !

Hast thou a friend ? and wouldst thou tell

What lies hid in his bosom's cell ?

Fill ! truth lurketh not in a well,

But in the wine !

Oh, what dost thou say to this word of mine ?

Truly, true are these words of thine,

Wine is a varnish wondrous clear,

She maketh all things transparent here,

Doth blood-black wine !

1851.

E p h i a l t e s . *



BAR up thy selfish door,
 Alone feast on the best,
 Drive back the needy poor,
 Still I am there, thy Guest !

Draw close thy curtains round,
 See that thy bolts be stout,
 A passage shall be found,
 Thou canst not bar me out.

I mount the high-piled bed,
 I bend with evil frown,
 A face, as of one dead,
 On thine peers ghastly down.

I come with crawling gait,
 I climb the swollen chest,
 A mopping, gibbering weight,
 Sits squatting on thy breast.

* The nightmare.

My hot breath sears thy brow ;
Be still, thou gasping wretch !
Methinks thou knowest now
Thy banquet's well earned Fetch !

The eyeballs roll and stare,
The white lips strive to pray ;
No hope, no comfort there,
We part not till the day.

The poor, the toiling wights,
From me and mine are free ;
Who revel half their nights,
Have part with mine and me !

Aye ! be ye Lords by day,
Not *my* Lords ye, I ween,
Ye shall not dare gainsay,
I am the Midnight's Queen.

1853.

Our Churchyards.

Is there no thought then for the dead,
Save transient grief, and tears
Shed by us all, when those we love
Pass outwards on their biers?

Dank and o'ergrown with weeds, each grave
Looks up to heaven's blue sky,
And seems to say, "The bitterest pang,
The worst was not to die."

They have no voice or speech wherewith
To ask our lingering aid,
Yet, as it were, beseechingly,
Their silent prayer is made.

Then let us love the place, wherein
Their mouldering relics rest,
Let us still keep ('tis all we can),
Their memories in our breast.

How can we tell, but that their souls
 Look sorrowing on the spot ;
How can we tell, when we forget,
 That they remember not ?

Ah, careless ones ! all hallowing love,
 May prove the holier dream ;
God's mysteries here, full oftentimes,
 Are other than they seem.

1847.

A Poet's Heart.

LEANING her breast against a pointed thorn,
 Singeth the nightingale, so poets feign ;
 A fond conceit, an allegory quaint,
 Showing the sweetest strains are born of pain.

A wayward and a wild thing is, in truth,
 Even as we feign that bird, the Poet's Soul,
 A spark of fire that eats into itself,
 Waxing and waning as a kindled coal.

The self-selected thorn is clasped and pressed
 Unto the heart of every child of song,
 Feelings too highly wrought, a sense too keen
 Of real or imaginary wrong.

Warm, hasty, shrinking, fond of solitude,
 Loving to commune with itself apart,
 Sunshine and cloud, mixed, as in April's day,
 Shadow and light—such is the poet's heart.

1851.

Hope.

OH! what a world of deep thought lies
Within one little word :
Hope—hope unseen by mortal eyes,
And yet incessant heard.

From whence? Like echo's answering tone
She but repeats her part,
The voice went forth from Shiloh's throne
That vibrates in the heart.

As earthly music dieth, drowned
When mighty thunderings roll,
So earthly hopes are voiceless found
When heavenly touch the soul.

Cease we from man, and man's vain fear,
And give the one thing scope ;
Our Alpha and Omega here,
To live, to die in Hope.

1853.

To my Old Pipe.

COME forth, old friend, with smoke embrowned
Of many a pleasant day ;
Grimmed record of the hours, whose round
We two have wiled away.

What, though thy merits may be few
In certain ladies' eyes,
And George the Fourth's old dandy crew
Thy votaries despise ;

I think of fair St. Leonard's nights,
Beneath the esplanade,
When by the long stretched row of lights
The wandering Germans played,

And I, upon the shingle heap,
Hard by the rippling main,
Apart from all, as half asleep,
Smoked, listening to their strain.

Why not ? Perhaps my tastes *are* strange—

Perhaps eccentric grown.

Pass on ! I ask not you to change ;

Leave me and mine alone !

Oh ! keep your gousty drawing-room,

And prate with ladies there,

Whilst I the slandered weed consume

Out in the open air.

A stroll within the forest glade

Ere spring's wild flowers are dead,

A couch in summer's woodland shade

With last year's leaves bespread,

A midday seat upon the ling,

A crust of bread and cheese,

A mouthful from the running spring,

A whiff that scents the breeze ;

Such hours I prize ; you prize them not,

Nor yet content to turn

Yourself unto your chosen lot

Must, too, your fellow spurn.

“ Such tastes are common, coarse, and low,

To grosser souls confined.”

Maybe—but, brother, *can* you know

The well-springs of my mind ?

Perchance, the wanderings that you scoff,
And idly, idle deem,
In me engender thoughts, whereof
Yourself may never dream.

Oh! mark, up-springing from the sod,
The new year's wildling bands,
And say, did Adam worship God
In temples made with hands?

When first His works Jehovah saw—
The earth, the seas, the wood—
He, by His own unchanging law,
Pronounced them very good.

And though His curse hangs over all,
The just reward of ill;
Yet through the taint of Adam's fall
Shine gleams of Eden still.

Aye, more—the trees themselves have words
For those who list to hear;
The brook's low croon, the wind, the birds,
Find language in mine ear.

The meanest and the highest plant
Are eloquent, though dumb;
And silent Nature hath a chant
That well may silence some.

The oak, foredoomed the seas to roam
 With proud man at the helm,
The cradle and the coffin home,
 The sallow and the elm,

Have themes that crease with thought my brow.
 Death visions of the Fall,
Musings on Love, which said, " Have thou
 Dominion over all."

Yet, if more active duties claim
 The best care of my heart,
I gird me up, and all the same
 Can strive to play my part.

So passes life ; and if content,
 What matters it a straw
Whether or no my leisure's bent
 Bend unto Fashion's law.

Leave varying creeds their little span,
 The Present and the Past :
God's Word, and not the word of man,
 Shall judge us at the last.

Christe, Audi Nos.

PILGRIMS on life's journey wending,
 From the outset to the ending,
 Wandering, tripping, earthwards bending,
 Christe, audi nos !

Whatsoe'er may be our station,
 In each trial and temptation
 Shield the soul from condemnation,
 Christe, audi nos !

When by pride of wealth uplifted,
 When with talents richly gifted,
 When by want and trouble sifted,
 Christe, audi nos !

What to ask, and how, unwitting,
 In our fullest much omitting,
 Hear, and grant as most befitting,
 Christe, audi nos !

Towton Field.

—◆—

[It is said that upon Towton Field, celebrated for the battle of that name, between the Yorkists and Lancasterians, A.D. 1461, a multitude of small red and white roses yearly spring up, and cannot by any effort be eradicated. *Si non è vero, è ben trovato.*]

—◆—

OH! greenly grow the corn and grass
 That spring on Towton Field,
 And yearly there the flocks and herds,
 Their increase ever yield.

But be the soil with corn-sheaf decked,
 Or with the grass bespread,
 One other crop comes up unsown—
 The roses, white and red.

And there they flourish, there they bloom,
 Man knows not how, or whence,
 For hand of man hath planted not,
 Nor man may pluck them thence.

Oh, greenly grow the grass and corn
On Towton hill and plain,
But corn, and grass, and rath rose shoot,
Rise upwards from the slain.

Palm Sunday saw two English hosts
Arrayed in order stand,
But glaives, instead of peaceful palms,
Were clenched in every hand.

And all that holy day they strove,
From morn till setting sun,
Until with night's descending shade
The field was hardly won.

The victor gave no quarter then,*
The vanquished asked no grace,
But, grimly as a boar at bay,
Fell dead beside his place.

The spring went by, the summer waned,
The dreary winter fled,
And with returning spring uprose
The roses, white and red.

* Speed, in his *Chronicle*, bears witness to the singular obstinacy with which this battle was contested : also to the facts of no quarter being given by Yorkists, and of the brooks upon the field being discoloured for some distance with blood. Thirty-five thousand and ninety-one fell in this action.

Since then, three hundred years have passed,—

Three hundred years, and more,
Since wimpling stream and rivulet
Ran red with English gore ;

And yearly yet those roses bloom,

In memory of the fight,
When the red rose of Lancaster
Went down before the white.

1859.

False Prophets.

WHO dares to say the world is near
To her predestined end ?
The very causes that ye fear
To other aims may tend.

Is it for works of magnitude,
Or for her craftsmen's art ?
Old buried nations rough and rude
Of such had more than part.

Though science wield in this our day
The sorcerer's fabled wand,
Yet all her lamps but light the way
To unknown lands beyond :

And as we look on cast attire,
Or on a thrice-told tale,
Some age may view the long stretched wire
And thunder of the rail.

Some age *may* view. Behold the sum !

Old, young, or in her prime,

We know her end shall surely come,

We cannot know the time.

1854.

Retrospect.

A STRANGE thing is woman's beauty !

A strange thing ! with man it changeth
Its form in every climate,

Even as the fancy rangeth.

In one thing remaining the same,

In its power so wide extended,
Standing supreme from pole to pole,
Absolute queen, self-defended !

Truly, I deem, in olden times

Spake Teian Anacreon aright, '

Saying, "Jove gave woman beauty

Instead of strength of arm or might."

With this one weapon, the fire-edged,

The piercer of hearts, she swayeth,

Even as she lists, her empire,

And each in his turn obeyeth.

Why speak we of men of old times ?
Say now who is there among us
Who remembers not in his heart
The syren strain she hath sung us ?
Even as the eye of Science
Poring on the rocks can trace
Full oft the ancient footprints
Of a now-forgotten race ;
So shall he who looks within him,
On his heart of hearts be shown
Love's small rose-tinted footsteps,
Hardened though they be to stone.
Who remembereth not the change,
At the dawn of manhood's day,
The opening of the Spirit's portals,
The shock of Love's electric ray ?
When the Dagon, self, fell prostrate,
Shivered in the fiery blast,
When on all his heart in triumph
Woman, the Conqueror, passed.
Then those dear and foolish hours,
Threads of gold and silver, twined
In the darker, homelier woof
Of departed years behind ;
Themes for well-worn scoffs and jesting
When for others broke their day,
Owned, beloved, in secret cherished,
When upon us dawned their ray.

Woman, woman ! we may boast us
Of a heart thou canst not win,
But thou hast, or had, or shall have,*
Soon or late, thy part therein.

I remember, I yet can feel
How in early youth I trembled,
Quivering in every pulse,
And yet what I felt, dissembled.
How I strove to speak. Stammering
I faltered out I know not what,
Words would scarce have told my meaning ;
Woe is me ! even words were not.
I saw others of bolder speech,
Free from false shame's most bitter pain,
Win from her, and lightly value
That which I would have died to gain.
She rightly deemed me fool, and dull,
I saw her eyes flash out the word,
But a sudden pang went through me,
Like to the piercing of a sword.
Then a voice came up within me,
" Vainly thou, thyself deceiving,
Feedest on hope as on ashes ;
Cease thy fond and idle grieving."
I broke silence, changing to mirth,
To the quips of light buffooning,

* French inscription on statue of Cupid.

Speaking quaint devices, as 'twere

My heart strings anew attuning
To the song of a stranger land.

And she—aye, *she* laughed, not deeming
What she dubbed light-hearted folly
Was but forced and bitter seeming.

Perish these old thoughts, I hate them!

Oh, would to God I might sever
Their memory's long dragged chain,
Breaking up its links for ever!

1851.

As thy Day is, so shall thy Strength be.

SIOK at heart, and ever pining
 For the ages, whence afar
 Old-world light is faintly shining,
 As the glimmer of a star;

When the Spirit, earthwards bended,
 Spake of things as yet untold,
 And the guardian angels tended
 Each her own peculiar fold.

Oh, believe it! now, as ever,
 Are those unseen watchers near,
 And the spirit's promptings never
 Silent in the willing ear.

Open Vision, seer's revealings,
 These have waned and passed away;
 Holy thoughts and Godward feelings,
 These remain, and these are they.

1855.

The Peepul Tree.

—♦—

Supposed, by the Hindoos, to be haunted by the spirits of the departed.—HEBER's *Journal*.

—♦—

A WILD and lovely fancy,
 A fancy of ancient times,
 Borne by the evening breezes
 Forth from the Eastern climes !
 What plant is like to thee,
 Thou haunted Peepul tree ?
 Beneath whose shade at eve the Hindoo lies,
 And hears, or seems to hear,
 His Father's Spirits near,
 Thronging thy green leaves thick as summer flies.

There holds he fancied commune
 With the long-departed dead,
 List'ning the dreamy rustle
 Of thy foliage overhead.
 Is there no plant like thee,
 Thou haunted Peepul tree ?
 Truly, beside Life's stream down bending grows
 The aspen, Memory, fraught
 With yellowing leaves of thought,
 Through whose moss-laden boughs a shiver goes.

Lie in her shade when evening
Comes fast closing in thy day,
Be sure thine ears shall hear it
As it passes on its way.
Even as the Peepul tree.
Her visioned leaves for thee

Shall teem with shadows whose earth-shapes have
fled ;

And Spirits gathering fast.

And voices of the past

Shall give *thee*, too, thy commune with the dead.

1853.

Symbols.

WE learn with toil what Science gives,
What wisdom can impart,
But universal springs and lives
The language of the heart.

By Gunga's stream when night comes down,
With cloud-wreathed vapours damp,
The Hindoo maiden twines her crown
Of flowers to deck her lamp.

She names a name, she breathes a prayer,
Then onwards thro' the mist
The tiny spark goes floating where
The winds and waters list.

And she is hopeful at the sight,
Or mournful as she sees
Its distant glimmer, or its light
Go down before the breeze.

By Life's broad stream I see Youth stand,
 (As I myself have stood,)
And launch with unforeboding hand
 Her lamp upon the flood.

Seldom or never may that spark
 Pass unextinguished on,
Wild waves are round the fragile bark,
 And as we gaze, 'tis gone.

But bitter, bitter is the hour
 Of wakening from that dream,
When Hope's first lamp and first Love's flower
 Go under in the stream.

1853.

The Pleasure Boat.

PILOT, what of the day?—"The craft
Before the wind is running,
Forwards, the crew, thy friends, abaft
Themselves are idly sunning."

Merrily, merrily speed we on
With harp and flute resounding;
To-day shall be as the day just gone.
Aye, even more abounding.

Pilot, pilot! what of the day?
"Red streaks the sky bedizen,
The stormy petrels round us play,
A cloud looms in the horizon."

Merrily, softly breathes the air,
What need for thought or sorrow?
Time enough for to-morrow's care,
When upon us dawns to-morrow.

Into her port that vessel pressed,
Rigging and sail were tattered,
The levin bolt had smitten her mast,
And her gilded hull was shattered.

Woe for the careless ones ! the strife
On each brow was deeply graven ;
The sea they sailed was the sea of Life,
And the port of Death their haven.

1853.

The Inner Chamber.



THE world—the strange, hard world ! Presumption
wearing

The crown of Worth, for Merit, boastful Pride ;
Famine with dull, bleared eye at Plenty staring,

Misery and Mammon jostling side by side :

Without, incessant din,

Yet Silence reigns within

The chamber of the heart.

There enters in no stranger rudely treading,

No, not the nearest, dearest one of all ;

One vestal lamp alone burns there, and spreading

O'er many tombs the lengthening shadows fall.

There, youth's first visions sleep ;

Departed spirits keep

That chamber of the heart.

The warder of the door, pale Memory, stealing
With upraised finger opens unto thought ;
So pass they in, the twain, together kneeling
Over those shrines, the dim, the seldom sought ;
Yet breathe they forth no sound,
That place is holy ground,
The chamber of the heart.

1853.

Old Things have passed away.

OLD things have passed away, and pass
 Unceasing from that hour
 When man, condemned to toil and death,
 Went forth from Eden's bower.

Yet types are they, and shadows all
 Of better things to be ;
 Things, that as thro' a darkened glass,
 We indistinctly see.

But all together work for good,
 And more, all ever will ;
 For those who to Jehovah's law
 Submit them, and are still.

Like Adam, we may lose our all ;
 Unlike him, count it gain ;
 For two fair plants of Paradise
 The Christian shall retain.

Come ye, learn wisdom and be wise,
 Take—eat—yet fear no loss ;
Our tree of knowledge is God's word,—
Our tree of life, the Cross.

Love.

NOT the boy-god, boy poets hymn with praises,
 Weak and infantile as thy graven form,
 Not the small satyr whom the Greek * upraises
 With lips of fire, and looks unholy warm.
 We will not have thee so ! a soul pervading
 Earth's sphere, now whitening to its autumn, asks
 Soul-worship and a shrine, whose flowers, unfading,
 Breathe not their incense round fantastic masks.

So come to us as in primæval times,
 For thou wast from the first. No child-god then,
 No earth-born dæmon prompt to whisper crimes,
 Purpling with sin the foolish hearts of men,
 But a blest, unseen influence meetly knitting
 Two parts to fashion one more perfect whole ;
 Calm, changeless, spiritual—as most befitting
 The young world's Lord, the newly-inspired soul.

* Anacreon.

So the first Father knew thee ; so we yet

May know thee, fainter imaged, if we will :

Uplooking to the sky the shadows flit

Earthwards of that which was, and shall be, still
Paler and paler waning as we stoop

Move downwards to the clay, and stooping aim
Each one to mould thee out. Creator, dupe

At once of that which our fond visions frame.

1853.

Sleep.



SHADOW of death, whose form with wings outspread-
ing,

Broods o'er the Universe from pole to pole,
Like him a blessing on the weary shedding,
Opening old fountains, leading forth the soul ;
A mystery dark and deep

Thou art, and hast been, Sleep !
Primæval, wondrous, ending but with Time.

All hail thee as a boon, all give thee greeting,
Yet dread art thou, and more so, since out-thrown
To the obscure thy limits lie, there meeting *
The spirit land, the shadowy, the unknown !

A little while, and then
Those boundary lines again
Are overstepped as each returneth home.

* *Uncle Tom's Cabin.*

Who sleep, die for the time, and he who dies
Finds but a more abiding resting-place ;
The soul by both alike is loosed, and flies
Forth for a time, and passes into space—
 That space, so dim, so vast,
 Where future, present, past,
Are gathered into one mysterious whole.

But who shall say, when there, what visions looming
Darker or paler, meet the ear and sight,
Soft strains, and warning voices faintly booming,
And glimmering flashes of far distant light,
 All dread, all vague, all strange,
 Yet telling all of change,
With lengthening shadow passing on the soul.

Again Mortality resumes her reign ;
We start, we gaze around as tho' distraught ;
Half memories haunt the yet bewildered brain,
And tinge the surface of awakening thought,
 Till fades each sound, each light,
 Down settling into night,
And earthly mists again come over all.

1853.

Darkness.

I KNOW not why, but higher spheres of life
 Seem to meet darkness with instinctive fear,
 And share man's weaknesses as well as gifts
 The more the soul-like reasoning powers appear.
 Perchance 'tis from the first : a faint impress
 Of that vague dread which surely fell on all
 When their first sun went down, and o'er the world
 Night spread again her dim chaotic pall.
 Oh ! how they gazed and watched as one by one
 Thro' re-appearing blue the stars came soon,
 And a new clearness in the lower sky
 Gave promise of the softly rising moon.
 So with large thankful eyes they saw the light
 And laid them down in peace.

But first of all

Was darkness truly felt by Eden's pair,
 When God had spoken, and they knew their fall.
 Fancy can paint them as they lay that night,
 Their first lone night of banishment ; forlorn,
 And shivering in their new gained sense of guilt,
 With faces eastward turned to watch for morn.

For they were wise indeed, but not to Life,
Knowing that Evil was, unknowing how,
Or when, or in what form that power might come,
Serpent, or Fiend, or marked with Seraph brow.
And knowledge seething in their troubled brain
Pictured ill shapes around them in the air,
Shadows half visible on dusky wings,
And devilish eyes that gleamed with mocking stare ;
So longed they for the sun, for in his light
God seemed more present ; and at opening day
Prayer gushed upon their hearts, and all their fears
Went from them as a dream, and passed away.
Thence came sun-worship in the after times,
Created for Creator blindly sought,
As sin-gained knowledge waxed, and fainter waned
The purer lesson God Himself had taught.

Not even now would I deride or scorn
The dread of darkness which has secret part
In many a soul, for there I seem to see
Adam's old weakness wrestling at the heart ;
Whence else, that innate fear in every child,
Whence, in the deepest ignorance that dread,
Peopling the midnight air with hideous forms,
And fancying back to earth the peaceful dead ?
No, look within, and truthfully confess
Thou art partaker of the common lot.
Asketh thou, *what* Spirit is ? where are its dwellings ?
Oh ! rather ask thyself, where is it not ?

New phases on the soul are ever opening,
New unexpected gleams show here and there,
As, for a moment seen, the summer lightning
Shows out the blue sky thro' the dim night air.
One guide alone have we, midst gathering wonders,
Scarcely knowing what we are, or why, or whence,
One bright fixed star, before whose steadfast shining
Doubt fades away, and vanishes pretence.
When the soul trembling, like the needle touched
Once by the loadstone, feels a new-born power,
Of turned, yet turning back to one fixed point,
Quivering, yet steadfast ever from that hour.

1854.

Death.

SAY what we will, disguise it as we may,
 Death is most awful, even to the best.
 We see man's generations pass away,
 But where?—Whose thought may ravel out the
 rest?

A mystery of mysteries is that phase
 Which all must enter ; yet none read aright,
 Until the day-star open on the gaze
 Thro' the departing shade that dimmed the sight.
 The scythe, the hour-glass, and the grim bleached
 bone,
 Meet sculptured emblems of a heathen creed,
 When terror had the mastery, be they thrown
 Unto the moles and bats, for we are freed.

Use we our freedom rightly : he who shoots
 The random shaft of God-forgetting thought
 Heavenwards, shall reap thereof the bitter fruits :
 Back falling on his head, the arrow fraught

With blind security shall smite him down,
Or pierce him through with doubts. Death is not
rest,

Death is not peace, save only where the crown
Of glory through the grave-night on the blest
And tranquil soul shines steadfast.

Prostrate lies
The last foe, stingless is his fabled steel ;
Yet has he power to wound, and upwards writhes.
And prints his bruises on the trampling heel.

Pilgrim ! the abiding staff is God's own word,
But human wisdom is a broken reed ;
Who turns to right or left, so far has erred
From the true path, and stumbled in his creed.
The old curse is not blotted out, not all
Death's natural terrors banished ; man must shrink
And tremble at his presence, till God's call
Shall gather Dead and Living on the brink
Of wide Eternity. And happy they
In death, and they alone, whose feet have trod,
Straightly, though tremblingly, the appointed way
Which Jesus opened through Himself to God.

1853.

The Spanish Armada.

As a lion on his prey,
 Leapt the proud Spaniard forth,
To the sea-girded shores
 Of the Queen of the North.
He trusted in man,
 In the strength of his prow ;
He came in his might,
 And where is he now ?

In chapel and church
 The loud pæan raise ;
Not to man, but to God,
 Be the glory and praise !

In triumph and pomp,
 They came to our shore ;
The land that beheld them
 Shall see them no more.
He spake in the storm,
 They turned them to flee ;
He blew with His wind,
 They sank in the sea !

In chapel and church
The loud pæan raise ;
Not to man, but to God,
Be the glory and praise !

It was not our might,
Nor the strength of our arm,
That warded the blow,
That saved us from harm.
The hand of the Lord
Was the guard of our coasts ;
The Warrior that fought
Was the Lord God of Hosts !

In chapel and church
The loud pæan raise ;
Not to man, but to God,
Be the glory and praise !

1842.

Romance and Reality.

WHEN dreaming over books that paint
 Love perfect, good, without a taint,
 How often back we cast
 A wistful eye to real life,
 With all its petty jar and strife,
 The present and the past.

We cannot choose us but compare
 Our lot with that depicted there.
 And fancy ours had been
 The selfsame actions, had we gained
 The gifts, the blessings they obtained
 In fiction's fairy scene.

Oh ! change the real, or exchange
 The too bright theme for one less strange
 In matter and in look ;
 For why should dwell the sickened heart
 On things where we have little part,
 Save only in a book ?

It boots us not to wander where
Such distant visions glitter fair,
 The while with ill opprest,
As Dives, sunk in Hell, upraised
His eyes to Abr'ham's throne, and gazed
 On Lazarus in his breast.

Tried, sorely tried, learn to forego
The hope of what thou canst not know,
 And count it gain, not loss,
If it be thine to meekly wear
The crown of thorns, and daily bear
 The Saviour's daily cross.

1854.

My First Love.

My first Love ! my first Love !

Long years away have sped
 Since truthfully, as we deemed,
 Our parting words were said.
 Upon a broader life-track

We went forth into day,
 And in its glare the love-star
 Waned glimmering away.

I know not who first yielded,

But both have been untrue,
 Both turned away from old love
 And turned off unto new ;

What in younger days both proved,

We never more may prove,
 Yet, I would not *quite* forget you,
 Mine own first love.

My first Love ! my first Love !

I would not meet you now,
 When age has wrought his changes,
 I feel, on either brow.

Oh ! let me still believe you
What surely once you were,
And think of her of old times,
And not what now you are ;
One look would break illusions
Unbroken I would keep ;
One look might strike a chord, that
Unstricken now should sleep.
I would not strive with feelings,
As once of old I strove ;
Yet I would not *quite* forget you,
Mine own first Love.

My first Love ! my first Love !
The once so cherish'd name
Has ceased to wake the heart's sigh,
The ready blush of flame.
The past is parted from me,
And each succeeding day
Steals onwards, onwards,—stealing
Your memory away.
Yet, sometimes in the gloaming,
The old, old thought will slide
Athwart me, like a shadow
Of dying eventide ;
And with the night around me,
And with the stars above,
Oh ! I cannot *quite* forget you,
Mine own first Love.

Where?

A LAND, whose mornings, fairly glowing,
 Lie not in promise of the day ;
 A life, whose flower, before its blowing,
 Time treads not under on his way.

Where man's every act displayeth
 Unselfish soul and single tongue ;
 Where (though with age the frame decayeth)
 Yet still the heart remaineth young.

Ah, Land ! no foot of mortal taints thee ;
 Ah, Life ! in life thou art not known ;
 We see thee but when fancy paints thee—
 We live thee but in dreams alone.

1857.

Forebodings.



DESPISE not we the souls that shrink
 And tremble as they feel
 Forebodings of they know not what
 Through all their being steal.

Perchance, so much of real woe
 Those hearts have early known,
 That through the Future's veil the Past
 A darkening shade has thrown.

Perchance some chord that still unites
 The living to the dead,
 Touch'd first in heaven, may down to earth
 A thrill responsive shed.

For nearer often than we deem,
 Our inner beings verge
 On that Unknown towards which the waves,
 Of Life for ever surge.

And thoughts may waken then for some,
That others never knew,
And gleams of that foredoom'd to be
Shine momentary through.

Not ours to know how much of truth.
How much of falsehood wears
The dimly vision'd fear, whose stamp
The prescient spirit bears.

Too vast the intervening space
For mortal eye to span ;
We can but pray, "Thy will be done !"
" *Thy* will," the best for man !

1854.

Mournfully, so Mournfully.

O SOUL, sad Soul ! what hidden woe
Lies hard on thee, and brings thee low,
That still thine inner currents flow
Mournfully, so mournfully ?

The shadow of the buried past,
Of that which was, which might not last,
Has thy chill'd being overcast,
Mournfully, so mournfully !

Thou art not dead to all things here,
And yet a spirit standeth near,
Whose voice sounds ever in thine ear
Mournfully, so mournfully !

And many days may wax and wane,
May bring thee joy, may bring thee pain,
Yet still shall sound that one refrain,
Mournfully, so mournfully !

1854.

The Irish Squatter.

HE stood beside his ruined hut,
 Unwilling yet to go ;
 He heard his children cry, his wife,
 Keen, swaying to and fro ;

And on his face there came a flush,
 A red flush, as of fire,
 And lifting up his horny hands,
 So spake the homeless sire :

“ The master’s hearth across the sea
 This night is burning clear ;
 This night the master’s word and will
 Have quenched an hundred here !

“ His very all for many days
 Has filled the stranger’s hand,
 For many days our bread gone forth
 To feed the stranger’s land !

“ Was it so much to leave to us,
 The children of the soil,
 God’s common gift of earth and air,
 And liberty to toil ?

“ Aye ! still the Orange robber’s yoke
Is ready to oppress ;
Still wills the rich man’s riches, more,
The poor man’s little, less.

“ They talk of alms and given help,
But tell not that each mite
Was wrested from our fathers’ hands,
And ours of very right !

“ They drive us out, and lavish gold
To bring the heathen nigh ;
They prate of Christian brotherhood,
And doom their own to die !

“ And these are good men ! these still walk
Upright beneath the sun !
God’s curse and mine upon the land
Wherein such deeds are done !”

So spake the old man, gazing on
The land that gave him birth,
Then, slowly turning round, went forth
A vagabond on earth.

L i f e .

OUR life is not, in sober truth,
 More real now, than when in youth
 All seemed so passing fair;
 But in ourselves the changes lie
 Which make us view with colder eye
 The selfsame colours there.

The sounding word of little sense,
 The hollow phrase of mere pretence,
 No more deceive or please;
 One homely touch, so it but find
 An answering echo in the mind
 Outweighs an host of these.

So backward ebbs in later days
 Our choice to Nature's trodden ways,
 The chords of woe and weal;
 And highest they, who most have dwelt
 On Nature's rule,—What hearts have felt.
 That, best the heart can feel.

1854.

The Legend of the Wölfsbrunnen.*



THE hunt is up at Heidelberg,
 The horns ring sharp and clear,
 And high-born lord and serf are met
 To drive the wild roe deer.

But where is Ferrand, he whose foot
 Was foremost in the chase—
 Ferrand, unmatched for daring deed,
 Unmatched in form and face?

Up yonder frowning mountain's side
 He toils with foot and hand;
 No helpmate save his own strong arm,
 No safeguard save his brand.

The hunt is o'er at Heidelberg,
 The wine-cup circles round,
 The ancient walls with merriment
 And wassailing resound.

* A spring in a small valley near Heidelberg. The legend is still extant.

But where is Ferrand, he whose laugh
 Rose lightest in the throng—
 Ferrand, whose voice was ever first
 To raise the hunter's song ?

In yonder lone enchanted hall
 The reckless chieftain sits ;
 Around no evil forms are thronged,
 Aloft no hell sprite flits.

But by his side, in close converse,
 A maiden's form is seen,
 Stately in gait and countenance,
 Yet gentle in her mien.

As passed those hours, so many passed
 Unheeded in their growth,
 'Till Love, who springs spontaneous oft,
 Spontaneous sprang in both.

Then sped the days as only they
 Who love have seen them speed,
 Valour, shy Beauty's meet defence,
 And Beauty, Valour's meed.

“ Now say, fair maid,” young Ferrand cried.
 And seized her yielded hand,
 “ Thou dear one, say, what happy chance
 First brought thee to this land ? ”

Faint smiled the maid, her rosy lip
 To his she softly turned—
 “Ask me not this.” The chieftain’s brow
 With dark suspicion burned ;

And though with gentlest voice and word
 She soothed his angry pride,
 No prayer might touch his sullen heart,
 He would not be denied.

“Then hear my tale. Far in the north,
 My father holds his sway ;
 The Sisters frowned upon my birth,
 Ill omens marked the day.

“And thus the prayer-regardless Three
 Rhymed forth their ominous law—
 ‘Or soon or late, Welleda’s blood
 Shall glut the wild wolf’s maw.

“They bore me here, a new-born child,
 Fenced round by magic power,
 And shaped a strong mysterious spell
 To guard me from that hour.

This starry zone, yon snow-white bird,
 This wreath, a sorceress gave ;
 These be the gifts that safely keep
 Welleda from the grave.”

“ Oh, cast them from thee ! ” cried the chief,
 “ Cast by the hell-born charms ;
 What succour needst thou save this hand ?
 What guardian save these arms ?

“ Then, if those vows, so often pledged,
 Thine heart hath not belied,
 Cast down thy spells and meet me there
 By yon blue fountain’s side.”

. Pale grew the maid’s rose-tinted cheek,
 A shivering seized her frame,
 And on her soul, as Ferrand spoke,
 A chill foreboding came.

“ O cruel words ! ” she softly said,
 “ Unworthy love and thee ;
 Till death, be sure, Welleda’s heart
 Will ever constant be.

“ Yet, reft of these my guardian spells,
 I may not, dare not go ;
 That selfsame hour, swift-following Fate
 Shall lay thine own love low.”

“ Thou lov’st me not, thou ne’er didst love ! ”
 Imperious Ferrand cried ;
 “ Fool that I was to ask of thee
 What love had ne’er denied ! ”

Her bosom heaved,—one bright tear-drop
 Fell glistening from her eye ;
 “Then be it so, since thou must doubt,
 Or poor Welleda die.”

The sun has cast on Heidelberg
 His last red rays of light,
 And in the heavens the summer moon
 Looks out, serene and bright ;

And lo ! by yon blue fountain's side
 Three forms are dimly seen—
 A slaughtered wolf, a dying maid,
 A youth of frantic mien.

His arm is round her fainting form,
 Locked in a last embrace,
 She looks unutterable love
 Upon his anguished face.

So died Welleda in the prime
 And pride of beauty's bloom,
 So set the sun of Ferrand's hope
 In everlasting gloom ;

And still one grass-grown mound, one tree
 By lone Wolfsbrunnen's side
 Mark out the spot where woman fell
 Through man's exacting pride.

1848.

Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots.



SHE heard unmoved the fatal message told,
 Her cheek blanched not, nor ran the life-blood cold
 Back to the sickening heart ; but as a queen
 She bore her, whilst around her maids were seen
 In all the frantic attitudes of woe.
 One, bending downwards, rocks her to and fro ;
 One stands as all aghast ; no breath, no moan,
 Betrays another's grief, but marble, stone,
 She sits, whilst from her eyes like thunder rain
 The tears splash down ; one, starting up amain,
 Shrieks, bans, and curses. Near, the Kentish chief
 Turns down his wolfish eyes, as when a thief
 Gripped in the act stands sullen, or some sprite
 Of hated darkness, by the enchanter's might
 Forced up to outer day, with evil glance
 Glares from his downcast eyelids all askance.

"'Tis sudden," were the words Queen Mary spoke,
 "Sudden, but not less welcome comes the stroke
 That ends my sorrows ; yet I scarcely deemed
 That she, my sister—she who surely seemed

Throned to love mercy, justice, and defend
 The suppliant and the stranger—thus should bend
 Her thoughts to slay the stranger, the oppress.
 Yet be it so—to me the change is blest,
 Nor deem I worthy of eternal bliss
 The shrinking soul that, at such time as this,
 Bears not the body up through that short strife
 That bars the passage to eternal life.
 But mine stands fix'd and firm—although, perchance,
 In girlhood's days, in happy, blithesome France,
 Some natural dread had been, some tears had passed
 To hear to-morrow's sun must be my last.
 Now, all is o'er, mine own familiar friends
 Against me draw the sword; a dark cloud bends
 O'er Scotland's royal race; and all I pray,
 Is that from Mary's blood some happier day
 May dawn on Stuart's name. For England's Queen
 I have unfeign'd forgiveness; none, I ween,
 Deem gentlier of her deed. 'Tis sure no wrong
 To grant the freedom I have sighed for long.
 Weep not! to-morrow all shall see that I,
 As Christian and as Queen know how to die;
 Nor deem them for myself, if trace of tears
 On this wan cheek at early dawn appears:
 My spirit joyous stirs, and in this breast
 Pants but to flee away and be at rest."

The fatal hour is come, that morning's red,
 Whose eve shall see thee numbered with the dead,

Wronged Mary Stuart ! All death's hideous gear—
 The axe, the block, the headsman—wait thee near.
 Yet still, with heart unstirred, with look serene,
 Moves onward to her death fair Scotland's Queen.
 Calm she unrobes her, calmly bends and prays
 For England's Queen—success and length of days
 For her who shortens hers. “ Tell each true heart ”
 (These her last words) “ that firmly I depart
 Fixed in the ancient faith : I know no wrong
 That I have done to any ; but ere long
 Before His throne we face to face shall plead,
 Who sees the secret thought clear as the deed.
 There I repose my trust ; His doom shall tell
 Mine innocence or guilt—and now, farewell ! ”

'Tis done ! one bigot voice is heard alone,
 “ Thus die Eliza's foes ! ” One sullen tone
 Singly replies, “ Amen.” The heaving breast,
 The starting tear-drop, show how feel the rest.

O Mary Stuart ! gentlest of thy race,
 Unmatched in form and loveliness of face !
 How can we deem thee guilty, yet survey
 Thy last calm hours, when hope had passed away !
 Surely, no sullen apathy of crime
 Bore up thy spirit in that awful time ;
 Not the dull consciousness of hidden guilt,
 But thy firm trust on Jesu's mercy built,

Bade thee with Faith's strong eye the future scan,
 And hope that mercy here denied by man.
 In the dark shadow of that gloomy vale,
 Where e'en the mightiest spirits bend and quail,
 There wast thou proved, there counted to be pure ;
 Thence hast thou passed in innocence secure,
 Safe from the smiter's hand, the oppressor's rod,
 Wafted on seraph wings to meet thy God.

And she, the haughty one, who bade thee die,
 Where were *her* comforts when her hour drew nigh ?
 Darkly the evening's cloud obscured that sun,
 Who erst triumphant on his course had run ;
 Not as *thy* spirit, hastening to the goal,
 Stirred in her breast the trembling conscious soul,
 But sunk in lethargy she lies ; no more
 Heeds she the flatterer's tongue, so loved before :
 Sorrow, remorse, a vague and fearful dread,
 Call up the phantoms of the murdered dead ;
 Essex, Northumberland, Queen Mary's fall,
 Guilt's blood-stained finger traces on the wall,
 Points to each ghastly form with glaring eye,
 Bids her review her deeds, despair, and die.

1847.

The Magic Pipe.



MANY a tale first told in joke
 For the delight of nurs'ry folk
 Is, in itself, a type ;
 Gather we something, if we can,
 From the old story of the man
 Who played the magic pipe.

When, I know not, but in old days,
 Ere shepherds' pipes became short clays,
 One walked across the mead,
 And as he passed beneath a tree,
 It so fell out he chanced to see
 A long, smooth oaten reed.

Soon with his knife he shaped the prize,
 Then on the jointed pipe he tries
 Some tune that came to hand.
 Presto—he scarce had breathed a sound,
 When from all sides came thronging round
 The fairies in a band.

Heels over head, now here, now there,
They danced and gambolled in mid air :

Hodge stared, yet minded still
That he had heard the wise man say,
“He who a fairy sees by day,
May ask, and have his will.”

So from his mouth the pipe he drew;
All in a trice away they flew,
And left him in surprise.
Vexed, he began once more the strain;
All in a moment, there again
They danced before his eyes.

And to the last, as he found soon,
He could not stop to ask his boon,
But they all passed away:
Nothing to them was Hodge's prayer;
All that they wished or wanted there
Was that the pipe should play.

So in this world wherein we live,
Many will follow whilst you give
That which they chance to lack—
Like to poor Hodge : but ask yourself
Something from *them*, and every elf
Quickly will turn his back.

The Legend of the Redbreast.

DEEP awe throughout the heavenly host,
Thick gloom o'er earth and sky,
And clamouring Jew and Gentile thronged
To see the Saviour die.

No aid from hand or foot restored,
No voice from loosened tongue :
All stood aloof in timid grief,
Or mocked Him as He hung.

'Twas then, when all forsook their Lord
(The ancient legends say),
The Robin, fluttering round His head,
Would break the thorns away ;

And, labouring there with beak and claw,
The plaited crown she tore,
Until her wings and russet breast
Were all besmirched with gore.

Hence, in memorial of the deed,
Her offspring yet retain
The name of "Redbreast," and the plumes
Ensanguined with the stain ;

And wandering children ever own
Her legendary worth,
And spare her nest for His dear sake
Who loved them when on earth.

Fond tale ! yet deem not wholly vain
Whate'er engenders thought,
Nor scorn the childish lore whereby
The holier truth is taught,

How alms bestowed, and good deeds done
For love of Christ the Lord,
Though lightly here esteemed, shall have
Hereafter their reward.

1860.

Note.—I am indebted to Mr. Worsley, through the medium of *Blackwood's Magazine*, for this legend.

A Scandinavian Legend.



MATERNAL love, how beautiful thou art,
 How fixed thine empire over woman's heart !
 Not, as all other passions of the earth,
 Warped in the growth, or stifled in the birth,
 But prized and cherished as the vital breath,
 Strong to the last ; aye, stronger still in death.

There was a mighty famine in the land,
 And pestilence with hot and blasting hand,
 A faithful follower, through the remnant passed,
 The gleaner of the grave, and smote them fast.
 Man looked on man with dull and wolfish eye ;
 All wearied of their lives, yet feared to die ;
 None slept, none spoke, none stirred from out his
 place ;
 Death's cold blue grasp was stamped on every face.

But see ! from yon huge circle, stern and slow,
 To Haco's throne the priests of Odin go.
 " Haco, rise up, give ear, old Norway's king !
 And list the message Odin's chosen bring.
 No spoils of conquest won from foreign land,
 No gold, no wealth, the gods from thee demand ;

Blood, only blood, can give thy people rest—
The blood of one, thy dearest and thy best.
Haste then, be firm, as well befits the brave,
And give thy treasure to the gods who gave.”
They paused. The monarch with instinctive fear
Glanced on his youthful Harold, standing near :
“ Be this the sacrifice, and this the day.”
The stern priests spoke, and bore the child away.

On yonder plain that stretches to the shore
What means the throng, the gathering people's roar ?
Lo ! in the midst, with time's gray moss o'ergrown,
Towers grimly up the sacrificial stone ;
Fixed is the lot, the fatal hour is come,
On the huge stone the boy lies, scared and dumb ;
But Frida, Haco's loved and cherished wife,
Burst through the crowd, and thrust aside the knife ;
“ Not him, not him the vengeful gods require,
Not his the blood to satiate their ire :
I claim the fate, as nearest Haco's soul,
Be mine the lot to perish for the whole.”

The monarch heard—in haste his arm he threw
Around her waist, and backwards Frida drew ;
“ Behold the proof,” the frantic mother cries,
“ List to my voice, or vainly Harold dies ! ”
One mighty effort—from his grasp she tore,
Rushed on the knife. The deed of blood was o'er.

The Curfew.

FROM THE GERMAN.—AUTHOR UNKNOWN.



SICK at heart and worn in body,
 Wand'ring through the waning light,
 Hark, I hear the curfew tolling,
 Tolling, tolling in the night.

And I stand me still, and musing
 Listen sadly to the knell.
 Young and old alike thou callest,
 Tolling in, thou curfew bell !

Daily toil and daily pleasure
 End their daily course with thee ;
 Unto all around thou bringest
 Quiet rest :—but when to me ?

1856.

Ione.



AT twelve o'clock the last night
Ere she became a bride,
Ione sat half dreaming
Alone at her fireside,

And from an opened desk drawer
She held up to the light,
First one thing, then another,
Once precious in her sight.

Then in the fire before her
She cast them one by one.
“Farewell, the old is ended,
The new life is begun.”

1856.

Rizpah.

2 SAMUEL, XXI. 10.



MIDNIGHT, full midnight. Famine-worn Judea
 Seems as a chastened child in that deep calm
 To sleep and gather strength. The moon, the stars,
 And all the heavenly host with one accord
 Shine out, as if each orb would fain reflect
 The pardoning smile of God upon the land.

Daughter of Zion ! sleep and take your rest,
 Sleep on, and wake to bless thy Fathers' God ;
 For He hath made the cup of trembling pass
 From out thine hand, and dashed it to the ground.
 The land once more shall yield her increase, oil
 And wine shall make thee glad, for God hath blessed :
 Yea, and thou shalt be blessed at His word.

But whence that wailing cry? On Gibeah's hill
One solitary mourner wakes and weeps ;
Peace—but no peace for her. Goodwill towards
men.

But all her thoughts are fixed and centered there,—
There, on the fatal tree. To her no more
The whitening harvest, rolling as a sea,
Brings joy and thankfulness as heretofore,
For they, the beautiful, the much beloved,
They shall not reap it, or have part therein,
Or, home returning at the evening hour,
Join in the widow's prayer. The setting sun
Beheld her there, the rising beams of morn
Shall find her in her place. Shrunk up and crouched
On the damp rock she sits, nor turns her eye,
Nor shudders at the sight.

Corruption's power
May change those forms to others, not to her :
One thought alone is present : “ *They* are not—
My children !” Round her head the south wind
plays

Scarcely rising into sound, balm-fraught, and soft ;
But it blows chill on her, and pierces keen ;
And its sweet murmurs seem but as a dirge—
A dirge of pitying Angels o'er the dead.
Anon her wandering fancy shapes the sound
Into their well-known voices ; starting up,
She speeds her to the tree. “ I come ! I come !

Where are ye, O my sons !” With sullen croak
Some hateful bird, from off the topmost bough
Reluctant rising, sails into the night,
And she returns, again to watch and weep.

Speed on, speed on, ye ever restless hours !
Bring joy and mourning in their wonted turns.
What is your flight to her ? A mother’s heart
Shall steel each limb, and nerve her to a task
In which the mightiest warrior in the host
Had sunk and fainted. Summer’s scorching sun,
The baneful moon, smite down upon her head,
But she will keep her watch. The birds by day,
The gaunt, night-prowling wolf shall keep aloof
From these poor corpses, till the accustomed rains
Of waning autumn pour upon the earth.

Gather their bones, and hide them in the tomb
With Saul and Jonathan, their honoured kin.
God is entreated for the land, His wrath,
Even as a summer cloud, dispelled and fled.
And thou, wan daughter of old Israel’s race,
Wasted with misery, and afflicted sore,
Lift up the feeble hands and drooping head,
And bless, yea, bless thy Father’s God ; for He
Hath blessing yet in store. Turn back thine eyes,
Faith-fraught, unto the promises which stand
Fix’d, from the first recorded. He will come,

He will not tarry, who shall bear thy griefs,
And take thy shame unto Him.

They, thy sons,
Made expiation for another's guilt,
It may be, dimly shadowing forth a type
Of that great sacrifice for sin, when she,
The Virgin Mother, at the cross shall stand
Pierced through with many sorrows, even as thou.

Take thou thy part therein ;—thou, she, and all,
Who mourn, refusing to be comforted.
Christ, the firstfruits of them that slept, shall rise,
Bursting the bonds of Death. All, all mankind
Shall see Him, and upstarting at His word
Come forth to judgment : then thy sons shall rise,
With thy dead body shall they rise, and meet
Messiah in the clouds, and dwell with Him.

1852.

De Rancè at La Trappe.

[The incident here related caused De Rancè to retire from the world, and restore the order of La Trappe.]

DEAD to the world ! Oh, solemn sound,
 Of earthly ties and joys the knell,
 Whose common import soon I found
 In those whom once I loved so well !
 For where are they ? The careless herd
 Have fled and left the stricken deer ;
 Nor friendship's aid nor friendship's word
 Are mine to prove, or mine to hear :
 Like Summer leaves at autumn's blast,
 The fashion of their love has passed.

Yet I can pardon those who shun
 My wretched self in this my need,
 For what is it that they have done
 But walked according to their creed ?
 Let them depart, let me remain
 To humbly bend beneath the rod,
 And with this sinful body's pain
 Work out the pardon of my God :
 But will He, can He, ere I die,
 Look pitying down on such as I ?

The relies of a life—in youth
Marked but with varying grades of crime,
A hand unstayed, unchecked by ruth ;
A heart, life-weary in its prime—
Are these meet gifts, or sacrifice,
For man to offer unto Thee,
Who art of holier, purer eyes
Than to behold iniquity ?
These bring I. Needless care ! The scroll
Of coming judgment bears the whole.

Shall I then stand alone ? Among
Those countless myriad souls arrayed,
These ears shall hear one well-known tongue,
These eyes shall see one injured maid.
O God ! O God ! can even death
Bring to my victims no respite !
My name was on her latest breath,
My form shall meet her quickening sight,
Not as she knew me once of old,
A mail-clad baron, stern, and bold,

But shivering, pale ; one, on whose face
Is stamped the record of his fears ;
One, whose repentance finds no place,
Though sought for earnestly with tears.

I hear her loath, yet forced to show
Her earthly wrongs, my added shame ;
I see her tears remorseful flow,
As, scarcely breathed, she names my name,
And word by word discloses all—
The sinner's wiles, the maiden's fall.

Poor child ! for thou wast scarcely more,
When first I sought thy love to win ;
All yet were well had I forebore
To blight thy budding years with sin :
Thou wast so trusting and so pure,
From taint of earth so passing free,
Thou might'st at least have been secure,
For none but Fiends would injure thee :
Aye, none but Fiends ! Despair, and die,
Lost, guilty soul ! for such was I.

Oh, well for thee, that, early sent,
God's sternest angel burst the toils,
That, like a bird escaped, up-went
Thy spirit, saved from darker soils !
But can I e'er forget the day
When, at the well-known trysting hour,
From midnight riot I stole away
To seek thee in thy lonely tower.
No voice in whispers breathed my name,
I called thee, but no answer came.

Perchance she sleeps : with stealthy tread
I passed the narrow, winding stair ;
Once more I saw that little bed,
But, Jesu ! what a sight was there !
Death's hideous gear : strange, menial bands—
A form fast blackening to decay—
Low, hurried words—unholy hands
All busied round the lifeless clay !
One look sufficed. I knew the whole,
E'en that thy blood was on my soul.

Peace, peace to thee ! If prayer avail,
If peace can spring from such as I,
Oh, surely thou canst never fail
Of pardoning mercy from on high.
I know not. Doubts distract, and fears
Of unseen horrors pierce me through,
And conscience thunders in mine ears,
“ Thy God is just, His threatenings true.”
I feel it, and I bow the knee,
But all beyond is dark to me.

1852.

Note.—The account in the eighth stanza is fact. De Rancè entered the room by a secret door, and found his mistress dead of the small-pox, and the surgeon in the act of separating the head from the body, in order to place it more easily in the coffin.

The Garp.



THE Lady sat within her tower ;
 Her look was meek and mild,
 Her face was pale as beautiful,
 But oh ! her eyes were wild.

She looked to north, she looked to south,
 Across the salt sea-shore,
 She said, “ My Love to battle went,
 But he returns no more !

“ They bid me hope—they know not all,
 Or else they act a part.
 Last night I saw him in my dreams,
 The death-shot through his heart.

“ I saw him come.—In solemn strains
 I heard him pass away,
 As of the distant organ’s swell
 Upon the Sabbath day.”

She touched her harp—the lofty room
Gave back a low, sweet sound,
And echoes from the wall and roof
Went floating, dying, round.

“ ’Tis he,” she cried ; again her hand
Across the strings she drew ;
Again the walls and roof replied,
And back the echo threw.

And there for days incessantly,
She leaned her throbbing head
Against her harp, and swept the strings
To commune with her dead.

So was she happy, though her soul
Was darkened of its light,
And softly smiled, when all around
Were weeping in her sight.

They said, “ Perchance, her fantasy
May yield in other climes,
And newer scenes bring back the dawn
Of older, better times.”

They bore her off. She breathed no cry,
She did not strive or weep ;
But midway there a shrouded form
Was lowered in the deep. 1856.

To a Bride.

I CANNOT speak the hollow phrase,
So often idly said,
I dare not ask upon thy days
An unmixed blessing shed :

For well I feel thou too must know
The common lot of all,
The breeze, the blast of weal and woe
Predestined from the Fall.

Yet trust in God. He can renew
The good thou dost require,
Or bring thy spirit safely through
The baptism of fire.

Then be thy life, in open sight
Of man's and angel's eyes,
The life, which, like the taper's light,
Spires upwards till it dies.

So dark shall pale to Heaven's own blue,
 Out-opening through the gloom,
And Grief lay by her earth-soiled hue,
 As Faith's white roses bloom.

Pass, pass thou on thy pilgrimage,
 Though tried, yet not unblessed,
'Through youth sustained, through life's last
 stage
Uplifted unto rest.

1854.

Forwards.

BROTHER, sick with hope deferred,
Whom no inner voice has stirred,
Lift thine head, and take the word,
Forwards !

Man of sorrow ! be assured
What is past may be endured,
What is present may be cured.
Forwards !

Bide thy time if thou hast wrong ;
Not alone the palms belong
To the swift, or to the strong.
Forwards !

See not with another's eyes ;
Knowing what within thee lies,
Boldly venture for the prize.
Forwards !

Want may interpose her wall,
Fashion dub thy merits small ;
Time and action conquer all.
Forwards !

Nell Gwyn.

IN London stands, or else *did* stand,
A little church, on either hand *

With houses girded in :
Not much of note has it for eyes
Of connoisseurs, yet in it lies
The fair and frail Nell Gwyn.

What shall I say of her? The age
In which she lived is scarce a page

We would too closely scan :
When King and Noble fall away,
In truth, it is an evil day
For each and every man.

As from some cranny unespied,
Which dust, and dirt, and cobwebs hide,

Comes forth the gilded fly,
So, like the chrysalis, were passed
Her childish days, and there at last
She back returned to die.

* The old church, St. Martin's-in-the-Fields.

Yet may we not too harshly blame
Her course, if we her errors name
 As errors of the heart?
Chameleon-like, her virtue found,
And took the hue of all around,
 When all was in the mart.

When sin unblushing stood confessed.
When vice was merit, bad the best,
 She nursed no upstart pride;
The needy, though unknown to Fame,
From her might unrejected claim
 What nobler blood denied.

Where is the wonder, then, if she
In kindly guise remembered be,
 Whilst many a fellow mate
From memory's page has passed away,
Or now, as in her living day,
 Is mentioned but with hate.

And why? In humbler English eyes.
No guilt, or only trivial, lies
 In slips like hers, the while
Unbounded waste and pride of mind,
With foreign art and pomp combined,
 Full surely stir their bile.

They saw her deeds, they felt her aid ;
The poor relieved, the bailiffs paid,*
 Such acts they understood ;
She seemed, despite of common fame,
A dear, kind lady all the same,
 Who loved to do them good.

God rest her soul, the untamed one,
True child of frolic, reckless fun,
 And harmless pungent wit !
And many a soldier, who has found
A house and home on Chelsea's ground,
 That prayer will echo yet.†

God rest her soul ! nor let the wise
Speak of her in that doubtful guise,
 To blame so near akin :
Death hath wiped off her fleshly stains ;
The ill hath died, the good remains
 Of poor Nell Gwyn.

1853.

* Nell Gwyn released a clergyman from bailiffs in the street.

† Chelsea Hospital, founded by Charles II. at the request of Nell Gwyn.

The Ideal.

ON the lone hours of thought
 Stealeth, by times, unsought,
 A dreamy Sprite of many-coloured hue ;
 Foe to the living real,
 All hail, thou wild Ideal !
 Loved, though deluding, listed, though untrue.

Whether, with swift winged hands,
 Thou back from foreign lands,
 Bearest the wanderer to his childhood's home,
 Freighted with wealth untold,
 To share the hard-won gold
 With those dear ones, and never more to roam.

Whether, with Love's warm light,
 Thou tinge the Spirit's sight
 Wafting our vision down the stream of Time,
 Until the fiercer glow
 Wane, tempered in the flow
 Of sweet domestic ties, and mellowed prime.

Or to the needy, bread,
Or to the living dead
Giving long-absent health for ceaseless pain ;
Whether thou crown with Fame
The unknown dreamer's name,
Or dower the ruined with thrice welcome gain,

Not all without intent
Of pitying Mercy sent
To soothe the careworn, guard us from despair ;
A spark of heaven-born fire,
An echo of Hope's lyre,
Low-toned, and vague ; yet ever, ever fair.

1855.

Home Truth.



WHAT! when Progress, trumpet sounded,
 Through the world has flown,
 Can her march be cramped and bounded
 In the rich alone?

Science grows—and all believe her
 Manifold and strong.
 Knowledge comes—and all receive her,
 Whether right or wrong.

Science grows—and as she groweth
 Be it ours to bend
 What she seeketh, what she knoweth,
 To its destined end.

Knowledge comes—and in her coming,
 Brothers, take we heed,
 Lest her words be godless mumming,
 And her staff a reed.

Not for ease, and not for pleasure,
 Any art has birth;
 Not to swell the fancied measure
 Of our fancied worth;

But that, joined in true alliance,
Hand and heart may raise
Up for man the fruits of science,
Up for God the praise.

Brothers, unto whom is given
Rule within the State,
Who are chosen out by Heaven
To be wise or great,

Stand ye forth, as prompt and willing,
As true men and bold,
As good stewards, well fulfilling
All the trust ye hold :

Neither deem the ills besetting
England's very core,
But a casual evil fretting,
But a skin-deep sore ;

For the heart, though dry and fallowed,
Bears the fruits of sin,
And, where God is never hallowed,
Devils enter in.

Make the Peasant's youth not only
Youth of brute-like toil,
Nor the workhouse bread his lonely
Claim upon the soil.

Give him also for his leisure
Whence he may aspire
Unto higher, purer pleasure
Than the ale-house fire.

Strive to make his burdens lighter,
And his sorrows less,
And the Law, his ready smiter,
Ready to redress.

With his dwelling far more sordid
Than the pampered dog's,
With his merits worse rewarded
Than the prize-fed hog's,

Ask we, why we meet for kindness
Scant return, or none ;
Or, why he, in very blindness,
Judge of all by one ?

Give the Craftsman knowledge, learning,
Ere in random haste
From the Tree, with undiscerning
Hand, he pluck and taste.

Schools have ye of Christian calling,
Schools for great and small ?—
Lo ! their fruits in filthy scrawling
On the wayside wall.

Husband, wife, and son, and daughter,
 Herded in one room,
Pent as sheep for Satan's slaughter,
 Reckless meet their doom.

With no self-respect to soften
 Passions instinct led,
Ground by petty tyrants often,
 Often pinched for bread ;

With the scenes of sin before them,
 With their home a sewer,
With the guilty ones who bore them,
 How shall they be pure ?

Brothers, brothers ! whilst we slumber,
 Time is moving on ;
Whilst we count them, from our number
 One more day is gone.

And experience points to ages
 Past, and teaches how
All the Broad of olden sages
 Is but Narrow now.

Will we that the changes dawning
 Slowly into light,
Come, as comes the May-day morning
 After starless night ?

Then let old abuses perish,
 Though by time endeared,
And the stain of wrongs we cherish
 From the State be cleared.

Ask ye, who is equal, able,
 For the coming day ?
But be faithful, true, and stable ;
 God shall teach the way !

God, whose ways are ever holy
 In believers' eyes,
Chooses out the weak and lowly
 To confound the wise.

By the coral worm that lurketh
 In Pacific seas,
By the dews and blights, He worketh ;
 Are ye less than these ?

Whether many aid, or whether
 Ye be few and small,
Forwards ! hand and heart together !
 God is over all !

Over all—and ranks and stations
 Wane, and are as none,
When He bows the hearts of nations,
 As the heart of one.

Isiac Symbols of Death and Immortality.



A BROKEN lotus branch,—
 A captive bird set free,—
 Thus far within the veil
 Egypt by faith could see.

They graved not on their type
 Of earth, corruption's blight,
 But leaf and flower knot drooped
 Just sentient of its might :

A helpless, stricken thing,
 Yet in its death as fair
 As when in life it waved
 Flauntingly in the air.

But with an upturned eye
 The freed bird seemed to strain
 Forth to the realms of space,
 And looked not back again.

Wings to the quickened soul,
Earth to its kindred earth !
Whence came the ray of Truth,
That gave these symbols birth ?

So strangely near to God,
Yet stumbling as in night !
Oh ! are we nearer now—
We, who have seen the light ? .

1855.

Not of the World.

THE earth has many who with high aspiring
 March on her trodden ways,
 Legions who seek with hand and heart untiring
 To win, or merit praise.

But rarely seen, and seldom comprehended,
 Are they, the humbler crew,
 Whose round of duties is begun and ended,
 Scarce known, and prized by few.

They toil not for applause, before their faces
 No trump of Fame is blown ;
 And to their secret prayers, in secret places,
 Makes answer One alone.

Yet many noble deeds, here unrewarded,
 Those hands in faith have done,
 And many erring sheep, not here recorded,
 Those quiet voices won.

True household saints, whom often we, receiving
As angels unawares,
Are slow of heart to hear, and unbelieving
Of all their holy cares.

Whose gold is not of earth, and therefore numbered
With unregarded things,
And only rightly prized when, disencumbered,
The soul has gained her wings.

1855.

His Ways are not as our Ways.



No tale of queenly palace,
 Or old baronial hall ;
 But of the poor man's dwelling,
 The chamber close and small.

There two, in one bed sleeping,
 Drew heavily their breath—
 A mother and her daughter,
 Both sick ; one unto death.

The child was dwarfed and weakly,
 Yet struggled hard for life ;
 The woman gaunt and wasted—
 A lone, deserted wife.

And she had craved, in watchings
 And many tears that night,
 God's blessing on her daughter,
 And favour in His sight.

Then came a visioned angel,
And bent to kiss the child ;
The little one looked upwards,
Held out her arms, and smiled.

The mother rose up trembling,
Looked down upon the bed ;
The dawn of day had broken,
The dying child was dead ;

And on its face the sunbeams
Shed glories as she gazed ;
So found she faith within her
To say, " The Lord be praised ! "

1855.

I Love.

OLD, old words ! the same in fashion
 Now, as when the world was young ;
 Blurred, profaned by sensual passion,
 Sullied by the lying tongue.
 Even yet their sound has part
 With a Spirit from above ;
 And a thrill goes through the heart
 At the old, old words, " I love."

And those words, once truly spoken,
 Shall remain, nor pass away
 Until sealed by Death, in token
 That their gold be purged from clay.
 For a blessing blest their birth
 As they floated from above ;
 And a God first dowered the earth
 With the old, old words, " I love."

1856.

Trifles.



LITTLE specks of daily trouble,
 Petty grievance, petty strife,
 Filling up with drops incessant
 To the brim the cup of Life.

Deeper import have these trifles
 Than we think, or care to know—
 In the air a feather floating
 Tells from whence the breezes blow.

Call not happy those obliquely
 Following the track of ill :
 Never yet from muddy fountain
 Issued out the crystal rill.

Call not wretched those who, striving
 Manfully, would play their parts ;
 Though Egyptian darkness cover,
 Light have they within their hearts.

Rather speak of those who, neither
Wholly ill, nor wholly good,
Like to Paul of old, though willing,
Do not oft the things they would.

At our hearths, and in our households,
Life's true index we may find ;
Tiny motes, yet still denoting
All the bias of the mind.

Carry there the smiling faces
That ye wear when little known.
Who are best deserving, think ye—
Utter strangers, or your own ?

Happiness lies not so distant
As its counterfeiting ill ;
Rightly seek, and be ye certain
All may have it, if they will.

1853.

To-morrow.

“ That terrible Next Morning, when reason is wide awake.”
 • Sir E. BULWER LYTTON'S *Ernest Maltravers*.

HARD by each threshold
 Standeth a sprite,
 Waxing, as waneth
 Sable clad Night ;
 Never before hath she trodden the way,
 Never returns she, for into To-day
 With sunrise glides onwards To-morrow.

Stay thine hand, hasty
 Worker of ill !
 Slandrous Spirit,
 Peace, and be still !
 Evil unfinished, the *one* word unsaid,
 Meditate on them, when over thy bed
 Grey breaks the dawn of To-morrow.

That which thou dost, ere
Closing thine eyes,
Surely at waking
Ghost-like shall rise.

Sleep, the rest-giver, may shield thee at night,
Who shall keep from thee the Phantom of light,
Thy Nemesis, coming To-morrow.

Emblem is she of
Things yet unseen,
Which shall be, must be,
Which have not been.

Sealing the past with Eternity's seal.
Cometh, as she comes, for woe or for weal,
The last, everlasting To-morrow.

1853.

Merry England.

MERRY England ! there is magic
In the very word and name ;
Dreams of Mayings, thoughts of revels,
When old Christmas had its fame :

And the writer in romances,
And the poet in his lays,
Grieve that ever-coming changes
Should replace the olden days.

Was it so, in truth, or are we
Idle praisers of the past,
Deeming every innovation
Still more hurtful than the last ?

Merry England ! *wast* thou merry,
Bending down beneath the load
Of a griping, monkish priesthood,
And a blood-bedabbled code ?

Death for sheep, for horse, for cattle!

Well might e'en the savage think
England's laws, like Draco's, written
Down in human blood, not ink.

Was it when the fop's embroidery,
And the hoggish squire's feast,
Made the town and country differ
But as insect from the beast?

Or, retracing back Time's footsteps,
Was it of the feudal date,
In the grinding of the peasant,
In the rapine of the great?

No! though still the tide of evil
Cometh inwards like a flood,
Private interest oft prevailing
In the guise of public good;—

Though the wisest be but erring,
Though the selfish be a curse,
In the sounding march of Progress
Follow better things, not worse.

Dream we here as idle dreamers
Of millenniums of Peace?—
Not in our time, or our children's,
May the battle trumpet cease.

Hope we here to live as brothers
In the golden age of yore?—
'Twas not so from murdered Abel,
Neither can it be so more.

But we may hope, and we do hope,
For a broader, purer light,
And for laurels more enduring
Than the laurels won in fight:

Science waxing, man progressing—
So in hamlet as in town;
But by raising up his level,
Not by drawing others down.

Peace more firm, more equal justice,
Man more knit to fellow-man,
And the name of names, Old England,
Then, and ever, in the van.

1853.

Platonism.



IT is a poet thought, whoe'er
 He was that gave it birth,
 That they loved first in other worlds,
 Who truly love on earth ;
 That once the two were one,
 One in a mystic band,
 Dwelling beneath the sun
 Of the bright Spirit land.

Not here below the darkened soul,
 Enveloped in the clay,
 Receives, as she was wont to do,
 The intermingling ray ;
 Yet strange thoughts crowd the brain,
 And impulses arise,
 Whene'er the severed twain
 Meet in their earthly guise.

Love at first sight, we wrongly name
Those yearnings of the heart ;
Rather believe they recognize
Each one her sister part.
Seldom, as heretofore,
Blend they in union here,
Shall they not fuse once more,
Joined in some distant sphere?
1853.

Imagination.

THERE sits a maiden weaving
Within the dome of thought,
Her produce freely giving
To every one unsought.

Athwart the brain of childhood
The web she weaves is white,
Gossamer-like, all glist'ning
With hues of rainbow light.

Changed, changed! upon the tissue
Youth's crimson passions shine,
And earthly threads of evil
Throughout it intertwine.

The dial gnome of manhood
Gives out a longer shade,
And pale beneath it waning
The residue shall fade.

Now other shapes are bending
Beside the maiden there,
And darker grow the shadows
Beneath the hand of Care.

He lays his yoke upon her :
In bitterness of heart
She flings the shuttle from her,
She tears the web apart.

Then upwards, upwards gazing,
As though she strove to trace
Another, better mansion,
A glow comes on her face.

She breaks the yoke from off her,
Asunder rends the bands,
As false Delilah's green withes
Were rent in Samson's hands.

And once again, and ever,
She weaves a new device,
And all its lights and colours
Are lights of Paradise.

1853.

Swallows.



WORTH walks on rugged ways,
 Red gold has ready praise,
 Come, sun and summer days,
 Then come the swallows.

Poor men must live by rule,
 Sharp wit may go to school;
 Broad lands, and half a fool,
 Then, hey for swallows!

Lose all, and "you are rash;"
 Learn all, "it is but trash."
 Know nought, and if you've cash,
 Then come the swallows.

Shut hand, and pocket numb,
 Closed door, and visage glum,
 "Off, off! the winter's come!"
 Heigho, for swallows!

1854.

Reminiscences.

THERE is a charm, a mournful charm,
That clings to olden days,
As when in foreign climes our home
Depictured, meets our gaze.

Yet wish thou not to live again
Life's now half-finished task ;
Though worldly wise in much, in this
We know not what we ask.

For early days had early griefs,
Nor then was care unknown,
Though over each and every one
Time has his mantle thrown.

Though softening tints hang over all
The dangers of the way,
Even as the setting sun imparts
A softness, not of day.

More in their freshness lay the charm
Of those regretted years,
More in the yet not loosened grasp
Of all that most endears,

Than in the freedom from those ills
Which man may never shun,
Than in the absence of the doom
Which they may read who run.

Yet, youth *had* her peculiar joys,
Too fair, perchance, to last ;
Hope gilds the future, Memory but
Attempts down the past.

Not then we saw the snares and toils
That wait the traveller's feet,
But neither knew the Tree that makes
The bitter waters sweet.

Together, pray we, that they come,
The antidote and loss,—
The fading of all earthly things,
The brightening of the Cross.

The Battle of Sobraon.

A SONG for Britain's brave,
 Who fought upon the morn,
 When horse and foot alike
 Went down at red Sobraon !

Full on our falling ranks
 The iron shower came fast ;
 We deemed, quick closing up,
 Each moment was our last.

A sound, as of a stream
 That bursts its yielding banks—
 A sound of charging horse
 From out our English ranks !

A moment's silence,—then
 A sharp and steely cling,
 As of a thousand smiths
 Whose strokes on iron ring !

As sweeps the rising stream,
Whose torrent nought may stay,
So were the cannoneers
Swept from their guns that day!

A song for those who fought,
For all the living brave!
Honour, England's tears,
For those who found a grave!

1847.

Memoirs of Departed Genius.



It grieves me much to see the veil
 Torn rudely from the dead,
 And every trifle noted down
 Of all he did or said.

What boots it us to know that he
 Was erring in his span,
 That many a thought, and word, and deed.
 Showed him, like us, but man ?

He, like the image seen in sleep,*
 By Babylonia's King,
 Was but of mingled metal, but
 An all-imperfect thing.

The head, fine gold, the silver breast,
 Shine forth in open day ;
 Let these suffice, nor seek to spy
 The brass, the iron, the clay.

1853.

* Daniel, ii. 31.

God's Acre.

GOD'S Acre ! gave not men of yore
 Firstlings of that good fruit they bore
 To Christ's new-planted creed,
 When on the drear churchyard they placed
 That name, wherein the thought is traced.
 " God present in our need ? "

Present,—and in our need the same
 As that dear Lord who, journeying, came
 To Lazarus when he slept ;
 Who wills not sorrowing hearts should feign
 Themselves unmoved, nor had disdain
 To weep with those who wept.

God's Acre ! hallowing words ! and yet
 To Heavenly themes how scantily fit !
 For who shall name the spot
 In Heaven, or earth, in sea or air,
 In mirkiest night or sunshine, where
 That glorious God is not ?

Aye, wheresoe'er our bodies rest,
Be't Earth's green sod, or Ocean's breast,
 May Faith stand forth and say,
"No narrowing thought of man shall change
The Eternal Word, or cramp its range :—
 God's Acre holds that clay !"

1860.

Rushton Hall.



FOOT journeying down the sloping hill,
 As I am often wont to do,
 I pause awhile, and stand me still,
 When first the house comes into view.
 There, mullioned window, gable peak
 Shine whitening in the morning sun,
 As though had scarcely passed a week
 Since Tresham saw his labours done.
 The hand of man lies hard on all
 Thy once gray stones, old Rushton Hall !

'Tis foolish, but not therefore less
 A grief, to grieve that things are so,
 To hate to see thee in the dress
 That modern tastes and skill bestow ;
 For, running round, continual change
 Is, shall be, and has ever been ;
 And once, perhaps, it seemed as strange,
 As hard a thing to Tresham's kin,
 As now it seems to me to bear
 Another name and lineage there.

Yet so it is. The ruined fane's
Last stone is gone, the grassy sod
Lies smooth above, and nought remains
Where once of old, man worshipped God.
The mount is levelled, Hercules
Stands on the plain, forlornly bare,
And Peter's spring, once hid with trees,
Has donned a trim and modish air.
All changed, all altered. If for good,—
I cannot think it, though I would.

For these were wonders often shown,
And in our childish hearts enrolled,
When style and date were yet unknown,
And all seemed grand and very old.
The echoing gallery where we raced
With clattering feet to wake the sound,
The cypress chests, the armour placed
Above the stairs, the pleasure ground:
It makes me sad to think that they,
Though trivial things, have passed away.

If thoughts like these be littleness,
So be it. What I feel I speak,
Not questioning the right, much less
Denying that I may be weak.

Nay more, I grant it passing strange
That I should feel what now I do,
For dimly down the lengthening range
Of years, stand out the things I rue,
And why should they be more to me
Than other things that cease to be ?

To me myself it is not much,
That those I never loved or saw
Lie low, exposed to every touch,
Like buried soldiers, slain in war.
To me not much, that sold and bought
Yon fabric passed to other hands ;
My claim upon it was but nought,
Nor had I portion in her lands.
Then wherefore yearns this living frame
To those dry founts from whence it came ?

By secret sympathy induced,
The face of generations gone
Full oftentimes is reproduced,
And sire to son transmits it on.
May it not be that Spirit too
Hath sympathies as yet unknown—
That what we feel, and what we do,
Takes from some parted soul its tone,
And that ancestral Spirits here
By times are busy at our ear ?

So comes it then that oft we feel
As they had felt if still on earth,
Nor can our busier visions steel
Us wholly to their fancied worth.
But, be this as it may, old days
At times will stir the spirit's calm,
And sad remembrance sorrowing gaze
On every change, and deem it harm.
So have I felt, so feel I all
Thy sundry changes, Rushton Hall.

1853.

One Dead.

OVER the whole house
 Hangeth a gloom,
 Coming down, spreading,
 Out of one room.
 Softly on tiptoe
 The servants go by,
 Hushing each sound, though
 Scarce knowing why ;
 Speaking in whispers
 Under their breath,
 Fearfully owning
 The presence of Death.

Long time they battled it,
 Bitter in strife,
 Struggling, struggling,
 Death against Life.
 Peacefully, quietly,
 Ebb'd the last day,
 Into Eternity
 Melting away.

Close up the narrow home,
Bear it from sight ;
Open the shutters,
Let in the light ;
Breathlessly watching it
As it moves on,
Breathing more freely,
Now it is gone.

Yet, for thy sorrowful
Sobblings and sighs,
Check them, let other
Better thoughts rise.
Hallowed by memory,
Not by loud grief,
Leave in the garner
The ripening sheaf :
Think of the better part
When eventide
Gathers thy remnant
Round the fireside ;
Like a blest influence,
Speechful, though dumb,
Soul unto sister soul
Woo it to come,
Telling of hidden things
Which shall not fail,
Partly withdrawing
The interposed veil.

So when beside thee,
Close at thine ear,
Something shall whisper,
“Lo, I am here!”
Bowed in submission,
Sorrow may cease,
Changing, transfigured
To holier peace.

Love it, remembering
Thou still art free,
Sundered, re-union
Resteth with thee.
So shall remembrance,
Playing her part,
Soften the hardening
Soil of the heart.

Stealing on swiftly,
Years shall go by ;
Comes the solution
Of what 'tis to die :
Mourner, now mourned for,
Upon thee has passed
The first doom of Adam,
God grant it thy last !

To be Content.

SPEAK not of youth as of a time
Too wholly fair to last,
Nor yet implore forgetfulness
Of all the buried past.

The good and ill of ev'ry day
Are written on one page,
And often gleams of youth return
In sobered guise to age.

'Tis something, in this world of ours,
Although our blood be cold,
To sympathize with those who feel,
As we have felt of old.

'Tis something, when the aged bear
The burden of the day,
To aid and comfort in their need,
And cheer them on their way.

So, thread by thread the ties are twined
That link our hearts and hands,
And each succeeding phase of life
Is gathered in their bands :

New cares, new wants, new blessings spring,
To ev'ry age its own ;
It is but wholly ill with him
Whose heart is wholly stone.

1860.

Beauty's Wreath.



WHAT shall young Beauty wear,
 What for her wreath to-night ?
 The diamond round her hair,
 Shall it give back a light
 Quivering as on she goes ?
 Lo, in Brazilian mines
 The stolen negro pines,
 Wasting with home-sick throes !

Not round her head be placed
 The evil-omened gaud,
 Blood-sullied, and disgraced
 By rapine, violence, fraud !
 Lay by the glittering braid,
 Meet for a rajah's bride,
 Meet for the haram's pride,
 Not for an English maid.

Calm, queen-like pearls are here ;
They will beseech her well,
Looped to the small white ear,
Rose-tinted like a shell.
My dreams are of the main ;
I heard the billows roar,
As one dived off the shore,
Who came not back again.

Bring flowers. No curse of slave
Clings to their leafy cup ;
None found, or risked a grave,
Bringing their treasures up.
The hot close air shall fade
Those buds. Ere break of day
Their life shall pass away,
Lacking its native shade.

And I,—I saw one late
A happy child, and now
Walking in altered state
With deeply furrowed brow.
Whence came the prints of care ?
Ask her, and she shall say,
“ It seems but as a day
Since I was young and fair.”

All things suggest one thought.

Even our festive hours
Are with the moral fraught
Of yonder gathered flowers !
Leaf, bud, and opened bloom—
Child, maiden, wedded wife :
So runs the course of life
Unto one common tomb.

Yet flowers befit her well,
The pure in thought and deed,
Since once, ere Adam fell,
They bloomed without a weed.
And still, as records found,
Unchanged the frail things stand,
Breathing of Him, whose hand
First formed them in the ground.

Then twine the wreath of flowers.
The meanest one that grows,
Grew once in Eden's bowers,
The wildling as the rose.
Pure be the floral braid,
Purer the thoughts it brings,
Thoughts of a flower that springs
Never again to fade.

Egyptian Feast Song.

“ At the feasts of the Egyptians, they carried round an image painted like a corpse, saying : ‘ Look on this, eat, drink, and be jovial; for when you are dead, such will you be. ’ ” —HERODOTUS, *Euterpe*, ii.

HERE we are, a merry band
 Driving care away.
 Take Life as it comes to hand,
 Live ye for to-day.
 If we have the present hour,
 We have present store ;
 Present time gives present power,
 Coming, can no more.

Lift up thine eyes,
 To-day be wise,
 To-morrow within the unknown lies !

Love is like a dream of dreams,
Purple tinged in wine ;
Soul-entrancing till the beams
Of the morrow shine !
Beauty, youth, steal off ; and health,
Who can call it sure ?
If we dare not use our wealth,
We are truly poor.

Then love to-day,
Whilst yet you may :
To-morrow, thy love may pass away.

What old Time may haply bring,
Seek we not to know ;
When for flight he plumes his wing,
Drink, and let him go.
Fill the cup, the lotus flower
Round the forehead bind ;
Isis gives the present hour,
Care may lurk behind.

Then pour the wine,
The garland twine ;
To-morrow, the chance may not be thine.

Here we bring a joyless guest,
One whom all must see,
Days, or weeks, or years at best,
And thou art as he.
Eat and drink, be merry now,
Ere the time be fled ;
Yet a little while, and thou
Number with the dead.

The time draws nigh,
The moments fly ;
To-morrow, perchance, thou too mayst die.

1841.

Flowers.

FLOWERS of the field ! From days of old
 Bywords of frailness made,
 To point the tale so often told—
 How all things here must fade.

Blind that we are ! Within their bloom
 A holier moral lies,
 Unsullied by one thought of gloom,
 Faith-opened on the eyes.

Though seeming death pass on the flower,
 The buried root still lives,
 And in the due appointed hour
 Meet blossom surely gives.

No mouldering taint clings to the shoot
 That rises from the sod,
 Though earth retain the earth-born root,
 The flower looks up to God.

So might we see in all things here,
If we would rightly read,
How Life, not Death—how Hope, not Fear—
Is given as our Creed.

Pass by the more ignoble truth.
Upstretching to the goal ;
So shall the risen flower in sooth
Be emblem of the soul.

1853.

ALL hearts are sad by times,
 Yet scarcely know the cause ;
 Something is roused within
 Owning not outward laws,
 Not in our mortal span.

Even as the wind that blows
 We know not whence or where,
 That something stirs and moves,
 Wakening a secret care,
 Quickening the inward man.

Not when the foolish heart
 Is settling on its lees,
 But when Life's storms and fires
 Have rent away that ease,
 Listed with saving fear.

Lone, stricken, mantle-veiled,
 And bowed beneath the rod,
 Must that soul meet the voice—
 The still, small voice of God,
 Which saith, “ What dost thou here ? ” *

1853.

* 1 Kings, xix. 13.

The Library.



A NARROW cell to hold in store
 So much of ripened human lore,
 An almost mournful sight !
 How many busy hours, all bent
 On immortality, were spent
 To bring these books to light !

And see! the world-wide names of old
 Are strange to him whose eyes behold
 Them now but little known ;
 Well may the living author sigh,
 For in their lot he may espy
 The lot fore-doomed his own.

Yet if such works be haply found
Within a more concentrated round,
Or placed on fewer shelves,
At least, 'tis something to be sought
By those who think as they have thought,
And love them for themselves.

'Tis something, and perhaps 'tis more,
For they who seek will prize such lore,
And dare to have a choice
When, from a chance-discovered page,
The spirit of a perished age
Speaks with a spirit voice.

His place is fixed; and as we read,
From prejudice or envy freed,
We see with clearer eyes;
And, better known than in his span,
The living soul, the inner man,
Before us opened lies.

Such triumph has the master-heart
When Time's stretched wing has fanned apart
The mingled chaff and grain;
When all the age's tinsel, thrust
Away to darkness and to dust,
Is counted poor and vain.

For Fashion's wit has but its day,
And with that Fashion dies away ;
 But he lives on, who took
A higher aim, and, while he sought
The germs of humanizing thought,
 Could find them in THE BOOK.

1854.

La Demoiselle à Marier.

WRITTEN AFTER RETURNING FROM A BALL.



THE blackness of the waning night
Is vanishing away,
And chilly on the brisk fire-light
Looks down the dawn of day;

And still within my ringing ear
Comes up the music's din ;
Before my eyes, as if still near,
The twirling figures spin.

A pleasant scene, a mirthful press,
Yet sad to many there,
To whom in guise of happiness
Is given only care.

So saw I one : and yet no trace
Of sorrow caught the eye,
No outward grief upon that face
Was for the passer by ;

'Twas only when she chanced to be
Alone, her look confessed
How much the spirit yearned to flee
From thence, and be at rest.

But if you spoke, the cloud was gone,
And quietly once more
The old unmeaning smile came on
Her features as before.

Few words suffice for such disguise ;
All know the idol sought
Within a world whose holiest ties
So oft are sold and bought :

Yet on my heart a sadness weighs
Whenever I behold
The cherished lamb of early days
Thus proffered from the fold ;

And, musing on a mother's sense
Of woman's rightful fame,
I cannot choose but wonder whence
Such mother feelings came.

Oh ! keep her, watch her, guard her still
With closest eye and care,
Search out her heart, and, if you will,
Guide each emotion there ;

But spare to take from Nature's dower
The innate spark of good—
True self-respect, the fairest flower
Of sweet, sweet maidenhood;

And let her live, whilst yet she may,
Untaught to act a part;
Too soon that first bloom dies away
From each and every heart.

1854.

The “President.”

THE steam-ship “President” is moored
 Alongside of the quay,
 To-morrow’s sun shall see her
 (God willing) under way.

The place is like a market,
 Her decks are like a fair,
 And women, men, and children,
 Scream, shout, and jostle there.

And some are bringing luggage,
 And some are taking leave,
 And some are merry-hearted,
 And others mope and grieve.

That very night a sailor
 Unto the owners hied:—
 “The ‘President’ (God willing)
 Sails with to-morrow’s tide.

"It likes me not to see her,
For she is strained and racked ;
And much I do misdoubt me
The ship is broken-backed."

Then loudly laughed those merchants :
" The broken ship before
Made out a right good voyage,
And will make many more ! "

He shook his head, as doubtful,
Then slowly turned away,
" God grant that she may do so,
And me to see the day ! "

Next morning sailed the steamer,
And all those lives in freight
Were joined in one short entry—
" Sailed," (such or such a date).

And friends looked out for tidings,
And soon forgot their grief ;
And head clerks checked the ledger,
And turned another leaf.

So days passed by. One only
Of those few men who heard
The sailor's errand spoken
Thought ever of his word.

Quoth he, "This dreamer's vision
May yet too true be found ;
Such words as he has spoken
Fall rarely to the ground.

"I'll get me to the wise man,
Of whose new art they say
The distance is as nothing,
The past time as to-day."

The wise man heard his errand,
And thrice he moved his hand :
A pale, worn child crept forward,
And by him took his stand.

Again that hand is moving :
"Sleep, child ! I will it so.
Now, merchant, ask, and hear of
The things thou wouldest know."

"Oh, pale, mysterious sleeper !
Look out upon the sea,
The great Atlantic ocean,
And tell the sights to me."

"I see a long, black steam-ship
Fast speeding on her way ;
A white track boils behind her,
Before her jumps the spray ;

" And ' President ' is painted
In letters on her stern."
" Enough," quoth the blithe merchant ;
" 'Twas this I came to learn."

And still no tidings reached them
Of that ship or her freight.
He got him to the wise man,
And asked again her fate.

" I see the long, black steam-ship ;
She pitches to and fro,
And some are sick and sorry,
And some are down below.

" The captain's look is cheery,
A smile is on his face."
" God bless him ! " quoth the merchant,
" He merits well his place ! "

And still no tidings reached them ;
'Twas strange beyond compare,
For prosperous were the breezes,
The weather passing fair.

So back again he hied him
Unto the man of art :—
" At times a doubt comes on me,
And I am sick at heart.

" Oh, pale, mysterious sleeper !

Look on the western sea,
As thou wast wont aforetimes,
And tell the sights to me."

" I see the western ocean,

In all its sunlit glow,
And ships of many nations
Are passing to and fro.

" Thy ship alone I see not,

And mists, as if of night,
Hang heavy on the track where
Before I saw the sight."

" Oh, look again, thou sleeper !

Unclose again thy lip,
And name thy price, and have it,
For tidings of that ship ! "

" If thou wouldst give me thousands,

I can but tell to thee
The sights that on yon ocean
Are present unto me.

" Great ships are there, and many,

But one I see no more ;
That ship whereof thou askest,
The one I saw before.

" Thus far is granted to me,
And but thus far alone.
God's path is on those waters,
His footsteps are not known."

Then homewards turned the merchant,
A woful man, to hear
The words that had been spoken
Of mingled doubt and fear.

And many times the office,
And many times the quay,
Were thronged with anxious men, who
Went comfortless away.

And years have now passed by since
That steamer left the shore ;
The mist still interveneth,
And we may learn no more.

1852.

No More.

No more !—our hearts are slow in comprehending
 The words, albeit their burden press us sore ;
 Years must pass by before we truly fathom
 The deep affliction hidden in, “No more.”

No more !—oh ! speak it not in idle fashion,
 Whilst all things yet remain as heretofore ;
 Be sure the day *will* come when thou shalt sorrow
 In the full meaning of the words, “No more.”

No more !—it is God’s will ; and those bereavements
 Which now we bear, our lost ones also bore ;
 They know our weaknesses, and *they* can pardon
 The thought, “In other spheres ; but *here*, no
 more.”

1860.

Memory.

INTO the coming night
 The sunset melts away,
 Rose, orange, golden light,
 Fading to yellowed gray.
 Why, at Spring's fairest hour,
 Hath conscience added power ?
 Why is thine heart so sad ?

Back runs the stream of thought,
 Back to the days of old,
 Life mem'ries early fraught
 With tales of ill untold.
 Upwards, before the eyes,
 Spectres unbidden rise,
 Shadows of former self.

Righteous art thou, and good ?—
 Is it not also truth,
 Evil was not withstood
 In the hot days of youth ?
 Ask not to break the seal ;
 Opened, it will reveal
 A cage of unclean birds.

Oh ! not for pleasures gone,
Or pleasant days of yore,
Not for age coming on
Sigheth the heart so sore ;
Not buried flowers, but weeds,
Ill thoughts, unholy deeds,
These, these make Memory sad.

1854.

Freedom.

WHAT is Freedom? Not inditing
 Treason, if we will;
 Not the power of speaking, writing
 Of another ill.

Patriots unto strife appealing
 But for strife have thought,
 And the eye of party feeling
 Sees but what is taught.

What is Freedom? Not the many
 Trampling down the few;
 Not the sceptre wrenched from any
 Older Powers by new.

Strip from Greece and Rome the brighter
 Legends of our youth;
 See we Freedom when the writer
 Writes the simple truth?

No—like Isis, whose probations
Many proving failed,
Still athwart the march of nations
Stands the Goddess veiled:

Still, like Isis, she denies her,
Rigid and alone,
And the rash who *will* be wiser,
Searching, find her stone.

Time alone, in Time's appointed
Hour, can give her life,
And disclose her " God-anointed "
For the end of strife.

As the dial's shadow creeping,
Creeping on its way,
Slow advancing, never sleeping,
Comes her dawning day.

As we wax in Reason, Learning,
Waxes she in might,—
As our lamps grow clear in burning
She too gathers light;

And men only then shall know her
When their jarrings cease,
And the risen sunbeams show her
Sister unto Peace.

1854.

Scutari Nurses.

NOT with the laurel wreath, but with the oaken,
 Be these our sisters crowned ;
 And ne'er in old world days that civic token
 More worthy brows hath bound.

Across the sea, the bleak Crimean water,
 They sought the war-worn soil,
 Exchanging health and home for scenes of slaughter,
 Exchanging ease for toil.

The rough, rude soldier paused ere he addressed
 them,
 And checked his ribald mirth ;
 The wounded and the sick rose up and blessed them,
 As angels sent on earth.

What need have they of rank or titled station,
 Who chose that higher part,
 The world-wide homage of a grateful nation,
 A grateful people's heart ?

Oh, grave not we their deeds for coming ages
On brass or costly stone ;
Their names are written down on other pages,
Their acts should speak alone !

1856.

Passed away.

CRUSHED beneath the heavy blow,
 Scarcely yet we feel or know
 That the Spirit whispers low,
 "Passed away from earth to heaven."

Yet, though waning hope be fled,
 Rest is on that weary head ;
 What shall grieve or harm the dead,
 Passed away from earth to heaven ?

Doubt, and fear, and pain are o'er ;
 Dwell not on the world's "No more ;"
 Not so lost, but gone before,
 Passed away from earth to heaven !

1861.

Communion with the Departed.



WOULD we have form and voice come from the Dead
 Unto the eye and ear of mortal birth ?
 These have departed hence. With Life they fled ;
 All that was earthly has gone down to earth.

So long as they were here, like ours, each heart
 Gave its own feelings utterance in speech ;
 Now, from the Spirit world what they impart
 Spirit alone can hear, or Spirit teach.

Would we have communion ? Seek it, then, by
 thought,
 By prayer that speaks and lives, though sound
 be dumb,
 In the last words they loved, the haunts they
 sought ;
 Summon them thus, and surely will they come.

Not to thine eye disclosed, or to thine ear ;

 If thou hast hopes of these, oh ! let them cease ;
Cleansed and transfigured now, when they draw
 near,

 Their forms are, Love ; their answering voices,
 Peace.

They bring not myst'ries down, which all shall know

 In the appointed hour, so they be pure ;
Soul, sister Soul pervading, seeks to show
 But the one path that makes reunion sure.

Hear them in Nature's voice, the wind's low sigh,

 The rippling stream, the sea's far-sounding shore,
See them in Nature's works, the fields, the sky ;
 So have we part with them. We can no more.

1854.

The Beautiful.

WE seek the Beautiful from Life's beginning,
 Led by our passions, or by impulse taught,
 Blinded through haste to seize, and never winn
 More than the very shadow of our thought.

It lies before us, and as best befitting,
 God's gift, unsullied, and without alloy ;
 We seek it, and we have it not, unwitting
 We lack the rightful spirit to enjoy.

Severed too much by lines of demarcation,
 Christ and our daily selves are kept apart ;
 Duty with pleasure hath but scant relation,
 And where the treasure is, there is the heart.

Not only when the cloud is dark above us,
 Or when the daily cross is hard to bear,
 Be God remembered, but with those who love us,
 In every joy, in every household care.

Look on Him not as harsh and unforgiving,
Not as a man of sorrow, or in pain,
But as a living friend among the living,
Or, surely, He hath sojourned here in vain.

The Christ-child at the hearth, the Christ-man
gracing,
As when on earth, the board, the marriage feast,
Christ in our hearts and homes, so ever tracing
His image on the greatest and the least !

Think of Him thus, and thus in every station
The Spirit of the Lord shall make thee wise,
Eden be shadowed out, and all Creation
Disclose the Beautiful before thine eyes.

· 1860.

Irish Reen.

Air—"I wish I was by yon dim lake."

MOORE'S *Irish Melodies*.



THE death-cry faintly reached mine ear,
 Och ullaloo, och ullagone !
 I sought the cause, and find it here,
 Och ullaloo, och ullagone !
 This day have we spread
 Thy table forth with salt and bread,
 But thou, who givest these, art dead !
 Och ullaloo, och ullagone !

The widowed wife is keening sore,
 Och ullaloo, och ullagone !
 The dog sits whining at the door,
 Och ullaloo, och ullagone !
 Woe, woe ! wail and weep,
 Let all around the death-wake keep ;
 But thou art silent in thy sleep,
 Och ullaloo, och ullagone !

Thy years were few, thy friends were nigh,
Och ullaloo, och ullagone !
'Twas well with thee, why didst thou die ?
Och ullaloo, och ullagone !
Forth, forth into light,
Heaven shall be thy bed this night ;
But thou art passing from our sight !
Och ullaloo, och ullagone !

1856.

Note.—The keeners are hired mourners who attend funerals. The above is a literal translation of a keen, with the omission of several articles enumerated, as possessions of the deceased, viz. tea, sugar, tobacco, and whisky. The latter part of the last stanza refers to bringing out the body for burial. In every keen the corpse is continually apostrophized. The custom is fast becoming obsolete.

Hope on.

WHO faints shall lose the crown he sought,
 Shall lose his first, best stay.

Hope on; though hope with fear be fraug!
 The cloud may pass away.

Hope on, true heart!
 The cloud may pass away.

The ill shall have its destined course,
 But not beyond the day;
 Hope on, when bad hath changed to worse,
 The cloud may pass away.

Hope on, true heart!
 The cloud may pass away.

Our lot is in the hand of One
 Whom all perforce obey;
 Hope on, before thy sands be run,
 The cloud may pass away.

Hope on, true heart!
 The cloud may pass away.

Song of the Forge.

COLD is the forge fire,
Seemingly dead,
Yet in its grim heart
Embers are red.

Breathe on it fiercely,
Spirit of air,
Blast it from blackness
Into white glare !

Stand to thine anvil,
Craftsman unknown !
Touch not thy fellows,
Smite on thine own.

Ape not the pattern
Others have wrought,
Self was their teacher,
Be thou self taught.

Forge it as seemeth
Best to thine hand,
Mould to thy model,
Stamp with thy brand.

So in the balance
Weighed when it be,
Censure or praise shall
Centre in thee.

1856.

A Legend of Inkermann.*

ON Inkermann's heights when the grey dawn was
breaking,

Young Dermot looked round to his comrade, and
said,

“ This day shall the foeman be turned back in battle,
But on the bleak hillside must Dermot lie dead.

“ Last night came the vision, and thrice 'twas repeated,
The sound of a host passing by, and a Voice,

‘ High glory to England, if Dermot shall perish ;
Defeat, if he liveth. Speak, Dermot, thy choice.’

“ Scant time had I left me for thought or for choosing,
The bugles pealed out, and loud rattled the drum.
I started from sleep, and I shouted, ‘ For England
Be glory and honour ! Ye spirits, I come ! ’ ”

* Set to music by Professor Bernhard Althans.

Long hours raged the battle of tens against thousands.

'Twas night ere, defeated, the stubborn Russ fled ;

The day was to England with glory and honour,

But on the bleak hill-side young Dermot lay dead.

1860.

Foxglove.

FOXGLOVE, or fairy cap,*
 Name we thee as may hap ;
 Still art thou lovely, though, truly, not rare ;
 Lightly come, lightly go,
 As with men with thee so,
 Many are valued who are not so fair.

Sprung from a tiny seed,
 Yet on thy fellow weed
 Looking as upstarts most commonly do ;
 Pride goes before a fall,
 When the winds rave and brawl
 Those who stand highest have most cause to rue.

Lovely thy spotted bells,
 Yet from their dappled cells
 He who seeks honey may addle his brain ;
 So do old Adam's race
 Caught by a pretty face
 Afterwards often have cause to complain.

* Fairy cap, the Irish name for foxglove.

Foxglove or fairy cap,
Call we thee as may hap ;
Emblem of man thou, if rightly we read :
What matters, man or flower,
Palace or woodland bower,
Look at it, scan it—'tis only a weed.

1852.

Harvest Hymn.*



IN Winter, Spring and Summer
 Our labour did not cease,
 We gave our time and foresight,
 But God, the full increase;
 By his abounding mercies
 His people shall be fed,
 For He hath given sunshine,
 And plenteousness of bread.

Hosannah to the Highest!
 Who, as in days of old,
 Hath sent to fill our garners
 An hundred, hundred fold!

* Arranged for parish use, by Miss L. H. Tollemache.
 Cocks and Co.

Be thankful for the blessing,
Be mindful of the day,
That other, coming harvest,
When earth shall pass away;

When man shall be the ripe corn,
The garner, Heaven's dome,
When Angels shall be reapers,
And God's the Harvest home.

Hosannah, to the Highest !
The Lord of Love and Light;
Redeemer, Judge, and Saviour,
He cometh in His might.

1861.

Portraits.

TRIUMPHS of immortal Art and Genius,
 Or but lifeless daubs of paint,
 Records of departed youth and beauty,
 Or the aged, household saint.

Once, their value was not gold or silver;
 Nor their worth, the Painter's fame,
 But as spirits unto earth returning,
 Seemed those forms of doubtful name :

Yes, strong men looked on them speaking softly,
 Dreaming of a presence there,
 And lone women came and wept before them,
 Mingling with their tears a prayer.

But *now*, as strangers they sojourn with us,
 In a land that is not theirs,
 Relics of a by-gone age and fashion,
 Alien to our joys and cares.

Be the painter's art for those whose names are
 Even as a household word,
 But for our loved ones, the purer record
 Of a fame unseen, unheard.

Within our hearts and in our memories
 Surely will they live their day,
 With us, and with all they loved and cherished,
 Suffer them to pass away.

1861.

Five Travellers.

FIVE trav'lers in the morning,
 The morning of their day,
 With wreaths their heads adorning,
 Passed gaily on their way :

A fire-flood rose before them,
 A flood of ancient name,
 A crimson cloud came o'er them,
 Blood-coloured in the flame.

A warning voice withheld them,
 But died out in the din ;
 An unseen hand impelled them
 To enter boldly in :

Three passed out clad in iron,
 And one in silk attire ;
 One strove, as strives the lion,
 Yet perished in the fire.

The three were worn and wasted,
Were harder, sadder men,
The one still onwards hasted,
And twined his wreath again.

But woe for those who cherished
A passing hope alone,
And woe for him who perished !
His lot may be our own :

For each, ere he returneth
To dust, shall try the strife
Within the flood that burneth
Athwart the path of life.

1856.

Whether ?

AS those who die in early youth
 Live in remembrance ever young,
 So, Life in Death, lives on one Truth,
 Tho' mocked by heart, and hand, and tongue.
 Whether 'tis best it should be so,
 Or that her light go down with day ?
 When fades the sunset's reddening glow,
 A glimmering star can point the way.

The soul may pine for one kind word,
 Yet find no kindred spirit here ;
 Our hearts be sick with hope deferred,
 And yet be blessed in that we fear.
 Whether 'tis best it should be so,
 Or that our outward life be fair ?
 The stream may gently, quietly flow,
 And many a hidden rock be there.

The ring, perchance, had chilled the love
Which, cast away, will turn to God ;
Our thoughts may yearn to things above,
Yet shrink and tremble at the rod.

Whether 'tis best it should be so,

Or that we have our own desire ?

The Holiest One on earth below

Was proved with suffering as with fire.

1861.

Self.

HATH thine inner Spirit yearning
 Towards the annals of thy past ?
 Pause awhile—in thought returning
 Where Time-mists are overcast.
 Ranged on either hand,
 Thou shalt see them stand,
 Phantoms, many shaped, yet kindred all.

And a light shall dawn, and dawning,
 At the first but only seem
 As a vision of the morning,
 As the shadow of a dream :
 Faster throbs the heart,
 For their looks impart,
 What, we know not yet, and fear to know.

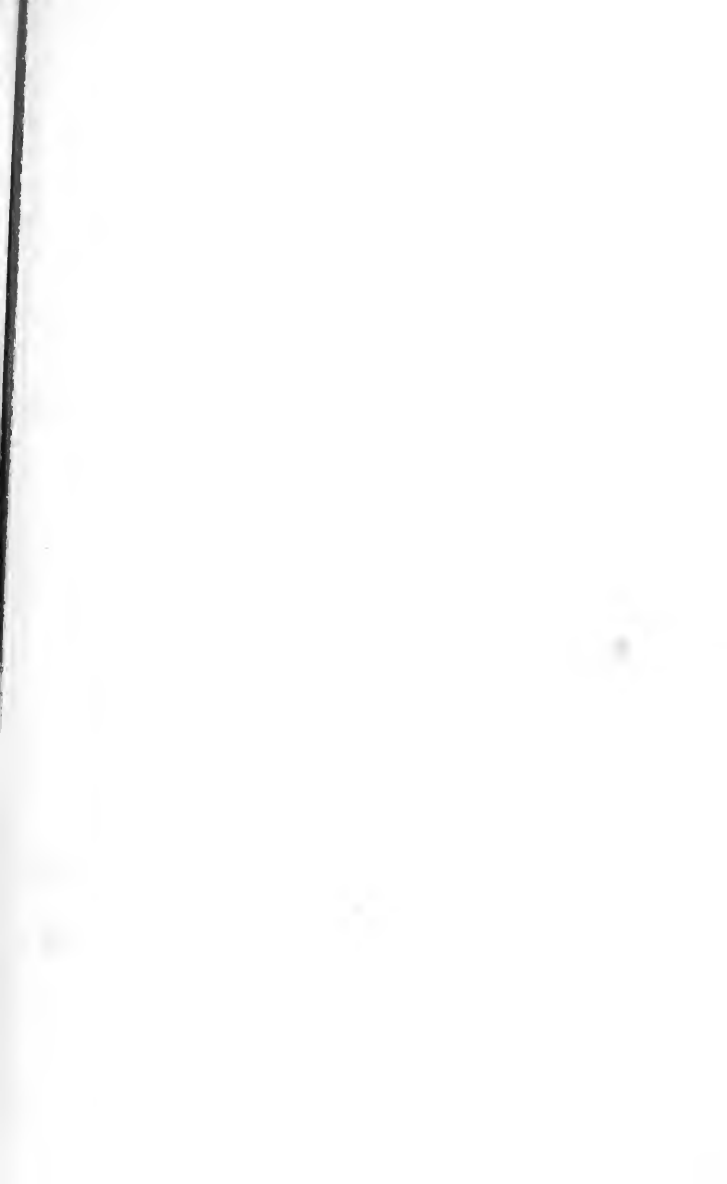
Yet a moment, and those faces
 Are familiar to our eye,
 And old thoughts, and deeds, and places
 Opened up before us lie.
 Strange beyond compare,
 Former Self is there,
 Former Self alone, they are but one.

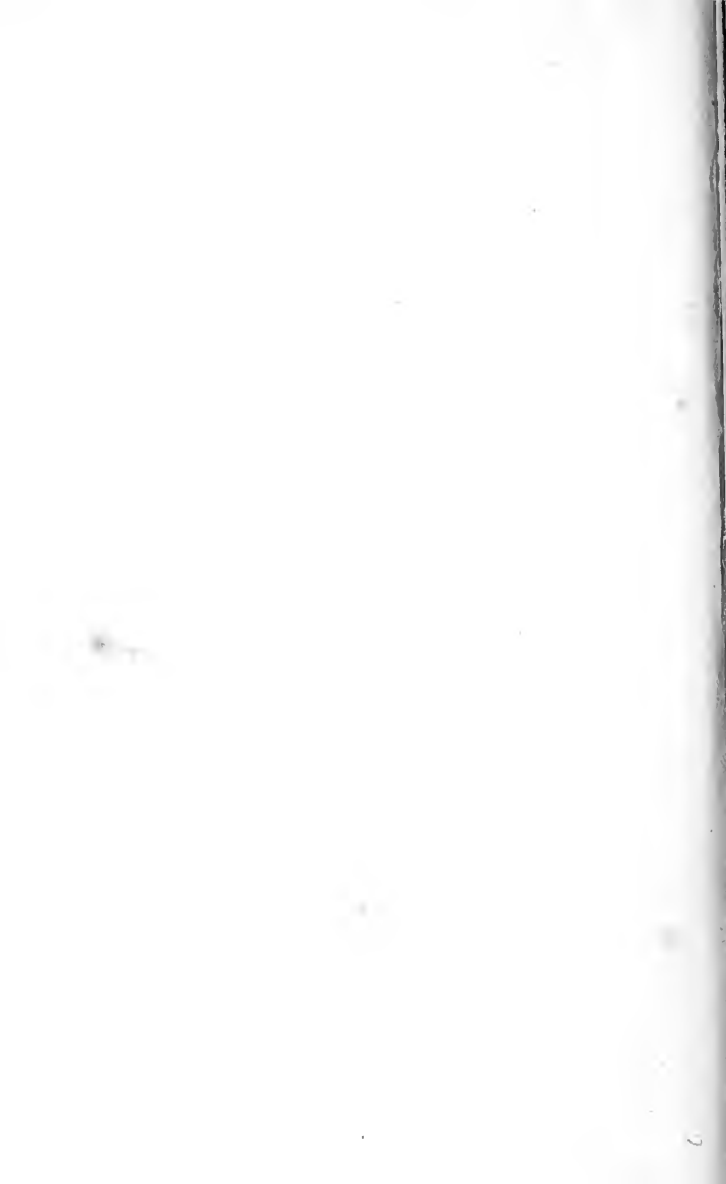
And as one those old Departed
 Raise their voices on the way,
From the child, the single-hearted,
 To the form of yesterday :
 “ Be it lost or won,
 When the race is run,
And the Spirit loosed, we meet again.”

1854.

THE END.

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